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THE
CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS
PROSE WORKS
OF
JOHN DRYDEN,
NOW FIRST COLLECTED:
WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS;
AN ACCOUNT OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE AUTHOR,
GROUNDED ON
ORIGINAL AND AUTHENTICK DOCUMENTS;
AND
A COLLECTION OF HIS LETTERS,
THE GREATER PART OF WHICH HAS NEVER BEFORE
BEEN PUBLISHED.

By EDMOND MALONE, Esq.

VOL. I. PART II.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY H. BALDWIN AND SON, NEW BRIDGE-STREET,
FOR T. CADELL, JUN. AND W. DAVIES, IN THE STRAND.

M.DCCC.

THE
CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS
POETICAL WORKS

JOHN DRYDEN

NOW FIRST COLLECTED

WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

AS A GUIDE TO THE

READER AND WRITER OF THE ART



ORIGINAL MS. IN THE LIBRARY

A COLLECTION OF HIS LETTERS

THE GREATEST PART OF WHICH HAS NEVER BEFORE
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BY EDWARD MASON, ESQ.

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PRINTED BY A. MILLAR, AT THE SIGN OF THE STAG,
IN ST. MARTIN'S LANE, AND T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

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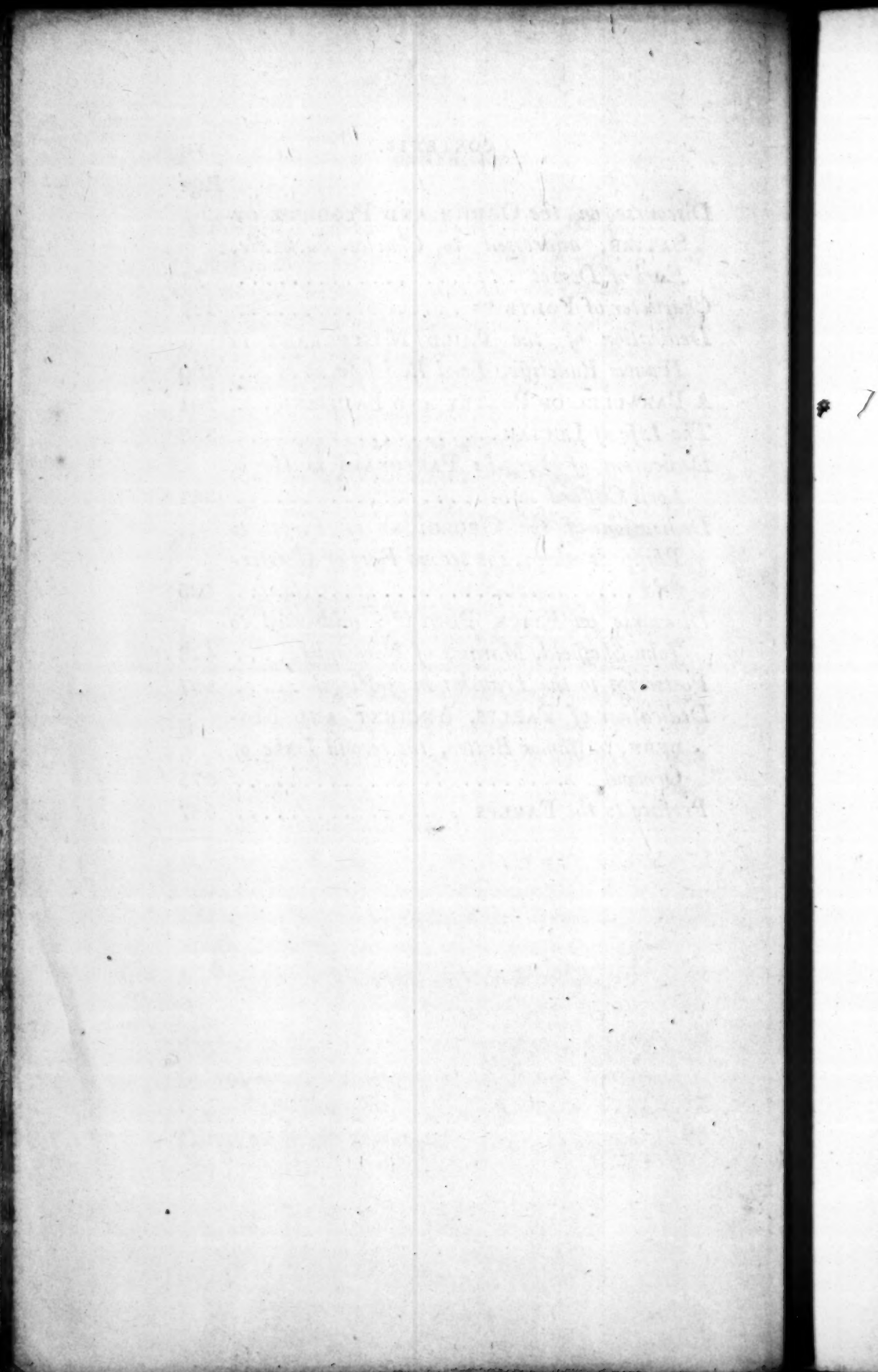
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LETTERS

WRITTEN

By JOHN DRYDEN

TO

SEVERAL PERSONS.

✍ When the Letters of Pope were originally printed, they were divided into classes, under the names of his various correspondents; those to Swift being all placed together, and so of Mr. Cromwell, Wycherley, Addison, Steele, and the rest: and the same method has been adopted, I think, injudiciously, in other similar publications. If the object were, to do honour to each of those persons, by shewing the number of letters which they received from Pope, or addressed to him, this arrangement was unquestionably the best that could have been observed. But to illustrate the history of the Author himself, which is more interesting to the Reader than that of any of his correspondents, all his letters, to whomsoever written, in my opinion, ought to be arranged in strict chronological order. The same topics must necessarily often recur in his correspondence with his various friends; and his letters, thus arranged, will, by juxtaposition, throw mutual light on each other, and become a history of his life and times; exhibiting, from week to week, and from year to year, a view, not only of his occupations, and studies, and printed works, but also of publick affairs and private occurrences, during the period in which he lived. The propriety and use of such an arrangement cannot be more clearly shewn, than by a reference to Mr. Boswell's most instructive and entertaining *Life of Dr. Johnson*; which derives great advantage from the author's having adopted this method.

On these grounds, I have arranged the following Letters in the order of time in which they were written, or are supposed to have been written, without regarding the persons to whom they are addressed.

DRYDEN'S LETTERS.

LETTER I.

TO THE FAIRE HANDS OF MADAME HONOR DRYDEN
THESE CRAVE ADMITTANCE.¹

MADAME,

Camb. May. 23, 16[55].

IF you have received the lines I sent by the reverend Levite, I doubt not but they have exceedingly wrought upon you; for beeing so longe in a clergy-man's pocket, assuredly they

¹ The lady to whom this letter is addressed, was our author's first cousin; one of the daughters of his uncle, Sir John Dryden, the second Baronet of this family. See vol. i. part i. pp. 24, 324. She probably was born about the year 1637, and died unmarried, some time after 1707. When Dryden became eminent, she was doubtless proud of the compliments here paid to her, and shewed this letter to some of her friends. Lest the date should too nearly discover her age, the two latter figures have been almost obliterated, but the last numeral, when viewed through a microscope, is manifestly a 5; and that the other numeral, which, as being more material, was more carefully defaced, was not a 4, but a 5 also, may be collected, not only from the lady's age, (for in 1645, she was probably not more than eight years old,) but from the time of our author's admission and residence at Cambridge.

The seal, under which runs a piece of blue ribband, is a crest of a demi-lion on a wreath, holding in his paws an armillary sphere at the end of a stand.

have acquired more sanctity than their authour meant them. Alasse, Madame! for ought I know, they may become a sermon ere they could arrive at you; and believe it, having you for the text, it could scarcely prove bad, if it light upon one that could handle it indifferently. But I am so miserable a preacher, that though I have so sweet and copious a subject, I still fall short in my expressions; and instead of an use of thanksgiving, I am always making one of comfort, that I may one day againe have the happiness to kisse your faire hand; but that is a message I would not so willingly do by letter, as by word of mouth.

This is a point, I must confesse, I could willingly dwell longer on; and in this case what ever I say you may confidently take for gospel. But I must hasten. And indeed, Madame, (*beloved* I had almost said,) hee had need hasten who treats of you; for to speake fully to every part of your excellencies, requires a longer houre then most persons^a have allotted them. But, in a word, your selfe hath been the best expositor upon the text of your own worth, in that admirable comment you wrote upon it; I meane your incomparable letter. By all that's good, (and you, Madame, are a great part of my oath,) it hath put

^a The word *parson* (*persona ecclesiæ*,) (which, says Blackstone, "however it may be depreciated by familiar, clownish, or indiscriminate use, is the most legal, most beneficial, and most honourable title that a parish priest can enjoy,") was formerly thus written. An hour, measured by an hourglass fixed at the side of the pulpit, was the usual length of a sermon at this time.

mee so farre besides my selfe, that I have scarce patience to write prose, and my pen is stealing into verse every time I kisse your letter. I am sure the poor paper smarts for my idolatry; which by wearing it continually neere my brest, will at last be burnt and martyrd in those flames of adoration which it hath kindled in mee. But I forgett, Madame, what rarities your letter came fraught with, besides words. You are such a deity that commands worship by provideing the sacrifice. You are pleasd, Madame, to force me to write by sending me materialls, and compell me to my greatest happinesse. Yet, though I highly value your magnificent presente, pardon mee, if I must tell the world they are imperfect emblems of your beauty; for the white and red of waxe and paper are but shaddowes of that vermillion and snow in your lips and forehead; and the silver of the inkehorne, if it presume to vye whitenesse with your purer skinne, must confesse it selfe blacker then the liquor it containes. What then do I more then retrieve³ your own guifts, and present you with that paper, adulterated with blotts, which you gave spotlesse?

For, since 'twas mine, the white hath lost its hiew,
To show 'twas n'ere it selfe, but whilst in you:
The virgin waxe hath blusht it selfe to red,
Since it with mee hath lost its maydenhead.
You, fairest nymph, are waxe: oh! may you bee
As well in softnesse, as in purity!

³ See vol. i. part i. p. 25, n. 1.

Till fate and your own happy choice reveale,
 Whom you so farre shall blesse, to make your seale.
 Fairest Valentine, the unfeigned wishe of your
 humble votary,

JO. DRYDEN.

LETTER II.

TO [JOHN WILMOT,] EARL OF ROCHESTER.

*Tuesday. [July, 1673.]*³

MY LORD,

I HAVE accused my selfe this month together for not writing to you. I have called my selfe by the names I deserved, of unmannerly and ungratefull: I have been uneasy and taken up the resolutions of a man who is betwixt Sin and Repentance, convinc'd of what he ought to do, and yet unable to do better. At the last I deferred it so long, that I almost grew hardened in the neglect; and thought I had suffered so much in your good opinion, that it was in vain to hope I

³ There is no date, except the day of the week, to this letter, of which a copy is preserved in the Museum; Mss. Harl. 7003. The Dedication referred to must have been that prefixed to Dryden's MARRIAGE A-LA-MODE, which was entered in the Stationers' Books, March 18, 1672-3, and probably published in the following month. Rochester appears to have sent the poet a letter of thanks for his Dedication, to which this reply was made some time afterwards.—I have therefore affixed—July, 1673, as a conjectural date to it. The second Dutch war was then carrying on with great spirit.

could redeem it. So dangerous a thing it is to be inclin'd to sloath, that I must confess once for all, I was ready to quit all manner of obligations, and to receive, as if it were my due, the most handsome compliment, couch'd in the best language I have read, and this too from my Lord of Rochester, without shewing myself sensible of the favour. If your Lordship could condescend so far to say all those things to me, which I ought to have say'd to you, it might reasonably be concluded, that you had enchanted me to believe those praises, and that I owned them in my silence. 'Twas this consideration that moved me at last to put off my idleness. And now the shame of seeing my selfe overpay'd so much for an ill Dedication, has made me almost repent of my address. I find it is not for me to contend any way with your Lordship, who can write better on the meanest subject, then I can on the best. I have only engaged my selfe in a new debt, when I had hoped to cancell a part of the old one; and should either have chosen some other patron, whom it was in my power to have obliged by speaking better of him then he deserv'd, or have made your Lordship only a hearty Dedication of the respect and honour I had for you, without giving you the occasion to conquer me, as you have done, at my own weapon.

My only relief is, that what I have written is publique, and I am so much my own friend as to conceal your Lordship's letter; for that which would have given vanity to any other poet, has only given me confusion.

You see, my Lord, how far you have push'd me: I dare not own the honour you have done me, for fear of shewing it to my own disadvantage. You are that *rerum natura* of your own Lucretius;

*Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri.*⁴

You are above any incense I can give you, and have all the happiness of an idle life, join'd with the good-nature of an active. Your friends in town are ready to envy the leisure you have given your selfe in the country; though they know you are only their steward, and that you treasure up but so much health as you intend to spend on them in winter. In the mean time you have withdrawn your selfe from attendance, the curse of courts; you may think on what you please, and that as little as you please; for, in my opinion, thinking it selfe is a kind of pain to a witty man: he finds so much more in it to disquiet than to please him. But I hope your Lordship will not omitt the occasion of laughing at the great Duke of B[uckingham], who is so uneasy to him selfe by pursuing the honour of Lieutenant-General, which flyes him, that he can enjoy nothing he possesses; though at the same time he is so unfit to command an army, that he is the only man in the three nations, who does not know it: yet he still picques himself, like his father, to find another Isle of Rhe in Zealand; thinking this disappointment an injury to him, which is indeed a favour,

⁴ Lucret. lib. i. Lord Rochester has translated the passage in which this line is found.

and will not be satisfied but with his own ruin and with our's. 'Tis a strange quality in a man, to love idleness so well as to destroy his estate by it; and yet at the same time to pursue so violently the most toilsome and most unpleasant part of business. These observations would soon run into lampoon, if I had not forsworn that dangerous part of wit; not so much out of good-nature, but lest from the inborn vanity of poets I should shew it to others, and betray my selfe to a worse mischief than what I do to my enemy. This has been lately the case of Etherege; who translating a satyr of Boileau's, and changing the French names for English, read it so often, that it came to their ears who were concern'd; and forced him to leave off the design, e're it were half finish'd. Two of the verses I remember:

I call a spade, a spade; Eaton,⁵ a bully;
Frampton,⁶ a pimp; and brother-John, a cully.

⁵ The person meant was, I believe, Sir John Eaton, of whom I know no more than that he was a writer of songs in the time of Charles II. One of them is preserved in Dryden's MISCELLANIES; and it is followed by another written by Lord Rochester, "*In imitation of Sir John Eaton's songs.*" He is perhaps the person mentioned by Antony Hammond in some verses addressed to Walter Moyle in 1693:

"*Eyton*, whom vice becomes, of vigour full,
"Foe to the godly, covetous, and dull."

⁶ Perhaps Tregonwell Frampton, Keeper of the Royal Stud at Newmarket; who was born in 1641, and died in 1727. Concerning *Brother John* I can form no conjecture.

But one of his friends imagin'd those names not enough for the dignity of a satyr, and chang'd them thus :

I call a spade, a spade ; Dunbar,⁷ a bully ;
Brounckard,⁸ a pimp ; and Aubrey Vere,⁹ a cully.

⁷ Probably the grandson of Sir George Hume, created Earl of Dunbar by James the first, in 1605. The title became extinct about the year 1689, for want of issue male ; and was attempted to be revived in this century by the old Pretender, in the person of James Murray, elder brother of William, the first Earl of Mansfield.

In two MS. lampoons dated 1687, formerly among the MSS. at Bulstrode, one entitled "The Prophecy," the other "A Catalogue of our most eminent Ninnies," the Duchess of Monmouth is accused of being gallant with Lord Feversham, and also with Stamford, Cornwallis, and *brawny Dunbar*. In May 1688, she married Lord Cornwallis. The Catalogue of Ninnies was printed by Curll in 1714, and ascribed to Charles, Earl of Dorset.—The person in question is there called—*strong* Dunbar.

⁸ Henry Brouncker, younger brother of William, Viscount Brouncker, first President of the Royal Society, was of the bedchamber to the Duke of York, notorious for having carried false orders to the master of his Royal Highness's ship, to slacken sail, after the engagement with the Dutch, in 1665 ; "which the Duke did not hear of till some years after, when Brouncker's ill course of life and his abominable actions had rendered him so odious, that it was taken notice of in parliament ; upon which he was expelled the House of Commons, whereof he was a member, as an infamous person ; though his friend Coventry adhered to him, and used many indirect arts to have protected him, and afterwards procured him to have more countenance from the King, than most men thought he deserved ; being a person throughout his whole life

Because I deal not in satyr, I have sent your Lordship a Prologue and Epilogue' which I made

never notorious for any thing but the highest degree of impudence, and *stooping to the most infamous offices*, and playing very well at chess, which preferred him more than the most virtuous qualities could have done."—Continuation of the Life of Clarendon, p. 270. The words in Italicks seem to be a periphrasis for the epithet here applied to this person.

⁹ Aubery de Vere, the twentieth and last Earl of Oxford, of that family. He was born February 7, 1627-8; (Esc. 8. Car. p. 1. n. 3.) was a Knight of the Garter; Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Charles II.; Chief Justice in Eyre; and Colonel of the first or royal regiment of horse-guards, which to this day is denominated from his title, the *Oxford Blues*. He died March 12, 1702-3, at the age of seventy-five.—It is observable that when a man has passed seventy years, his contemporaries are very apt to magnify his age. The late General Oglethorpe (who died July 1, 1785, at the age of 87,) was in the latter part of his life usually called ten years older than he was; and the twentieth Earl of Oxford has been always represented as considerably above eighty when he died; but the document referred to in the beginning of this note, which has been examined for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of the received account of his age, cannot err.

This nobleman is said to have deluded a celebrated actress by a fictitious marriage, aided by one of his domesticks, who read the service, disguised in the habit of a clergyman. According to the author of the MEMOIRS OF GRAMMONT, the lady whom he deceived, was an actress belonging to the Duke of York's company of comedians, who, he says, was celebrated in the part of *Roxana* [in THE RIVAL QUEENS]; but three other authors of Scan-

for our players, when they went down to Oxford. I hear they have succeeded; and by the event

dalous Chronicles, Captain Smith, Madame Dunois, and Edmund Curll, say, that the part in which she was distinguished, was *Roxolana* in Settle's *IBRAHIM*. Both these parts were represented by Mrs. Marshall in 1677, when *THE RIVAL QUEENS* and *IBRAHIM* were first performed; but if the Earl of Oxford were ever guilty of such a base deception, Mrs. Marshall could not have been the person deluded, nor could that have been the time; for she was an actress, not at the Duke's, but at the King's, theatre; and in 1677, neither she nor any other woman could have been deceived by such a ceremony in London, Lord Oxford being then notoriously not a single man; having about the year 1674 married his second wife, Diana, the daughter of George Kirke, one of the Grooms of the Bed-chamber to Charles II.—The person seduced probably was Mrs. Frances Davenport, an eminent actress in the Duke of York's company, who was celebrated for her performance of the part of *Roxolana* in D'Avenant's *SIEGE OF RHODES*, in 1662, and in another *Roxolana* in Lord Orrery's *MUSTAPHA*, in 1665. She acted in Dryden's *MAIDEN QUEEN* in 1668; but her name is not found in any of the plays performed by the Duke of York's servants after they removed to Dorset Gardens, in 1671; and Downes, the prompter of that playhouse, mentions in his quaint language, that she was, before that time, "by force of love *erept* from the stage." The same writer says, Mrs. Betterton succeeded her in the part of *Roxolana*. Mrs. Marshall, on the other hand, continued to act at the King's theatre for several years after this period.

Mrs. Davenport having probably been taken off the stage by Lord Oxford, in 1669 or 1670, three or four years before this letter was written, (1673,) and being then in his possession, this adventure, and his attachment

Your Lordship will judge how easy 'tis to pass any thing upon an University, and how gross flattery the learned will endure. If your Lordship had been in town, and I in the country, I durst not have entertained you with three pages of a letter; but I know they are very ill things which can be tedious to a man who is fourscore miles from Covent-Garden. 'Tis upon this confidence that I dare almost promise to entertain you with a thousand *bagatelles* every week, and not to be serious in any part of my Letter but that wherein I take leave to call myself your Lordship's

Most obedient servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

LETTER III.

TO THE REV. DR. BUSBY.¹

Wednesday Morning, [1682.]

HONOUR'D SIR,

WE have, with much ado, recover'd my younger sonn,² who came home extreamly sick of a violent

to her, may have been in Etherege's thoughts, when he wrote these lines.

¹ The Prologue and Epilogue alluded to, were probably those spoken at Oxford by Mr. Hart, at the representation of the SILENT WOMAN, which are printed in the first volume of Dryden's MISCELLANIES, 8vo. 1684, where they are arranged immediately *before* another Prologue "*spoken at Oxford in 1674.*"

² See vol. i. part i. p. 13, n. 9.

³ John, our author's second son, was admitted, a King's

cold, and, as he thinks him selfe, a chine-cough. The truth is, his constitution is very tender; yet his desire of learning, I hope, will inable him to brush through the college. He is allwayes gratefully acknowledging your fatherly kindnesse to him; and very willing, to his poore power, to do all things which may continue it. I have no more to add, but only to wish the eldest may also deserve some part of your good opinion, for I believe him to be of vertuous and pious inclinations; and for both, I dare assure you, that they can promise to them selves no farther share of my indulgence, then while they carry them selves with that reverence to you, and that honesty to all others, as becomes them. I am, Honour'd Sir,

Your most obedient Servant and Scholar,

JOHN DRYDEN.⁴

Scholar, into the college of Westminster, in 1682.— Charles, the eldest, left it in the following year. On these grounds, I have added 1682, above, as the conjectural date of this letter.

⁴ The following letter to Dr. Busby, appears to have been written by our author's wife, Lady Elizabeth Dryden, about the same time with the above.

HONNORED SIR,

Ascension Day, [1682.]

I HOPE I need use noe other argument to you in excuse of my sonn for not coming to church to Westminster then this, that he now lies at home, and thearfore cannot esilly goe soe far backwards and forwards. His father and I will take care that he shall duely goe to church heare, both on holydayes and Sundays, till he

LETTER IV.

TO THE REV. DR. BUSBY.

[1682.]

SIR,

IF I could have found in my selfe a fitting temper to have waited upon you, I had done it the day you dismissed my sonn⁴ from the college; for he did the message; and by what I find from Mr. Meredith, as it was delivered by you to him; namely, that you desired to see me, and had somewhat to say to me concerning him. I observ'd likewise somewhat of kindnesse in it, that you sent him away that you might not have occasion to correct him. I examin'd the business,

comes to be more nearly under your care in the college. In the mean time, will you pleas to give me leave to accuse you of forgetting your prommis consarning my eldest sonn; who, as you once assured me, was to have one night in a weeke alowed him to be at home, in consid-
 rasion both of his health and cleanliness. You know, Sir, that prommisses mayd to women, and espiceally mothers, will never faill to be cald upon; and thearfore I will add noe more but that I am, at this time, your remembrancer, and allwayes, Honnord Sir,

Your humble Servant,

E. DRYDEN.

⁵ Probably his eldest son, Charles.

and found it concern'd his having been *Custos*⁶ foure or five dayes together. But if he admonished, and was not believed, because other boyes combined to discredit him with false witnesseing, and to save them selves, perhaps his crime is not so great. Another fault it seems he made, which was going into one Hawkes his house, with some others: which you hapning to see, sent your servant to know who they were, and he onely returned you my sonn's name: so the rest escaped.

I have no fault to find with my sonn's punishment; for that is, and ought to be, reserv'd to any master, much more to you who have been his father's. But your man was certainly to blame, to name him onely; and 'tis onely my respect to you, that I do not take notice of it to him. My first rash resolutions were, to have brought things past any composure, by immediately sending for my sonn's

⁶ In the hall of the college of Westminster, when the boys are at dinner, it is *ex officio* the place of the second boy in the second election to keep order among the two under elections; and if any word, after he has ordered silence, be spoken, except in Latin, he says to the speaker, *tu es CUSTOS*; and this term passes from the second speaker to the third or more, till dinner is over. Whoever is then *Custos*, has an imposition.

It is highly probable, (adds the very respectable gentleman to whom I am indebted for this information,) that there had formerly been a *tessera* or *symbolum* delivered from boy to boy, as at some French schools now, and that *Custos* meant *Custos tesserae*, *symboli*, &c.; but at Westminster the symbol is totally unknown at present.

things out of college; but upon recollection, I find I have a double tye upon me not to do it: one, my obligations to you for my education; another, my great tendernesse of doeing any thing offensive to my Lord Bishop of Rochester,⁶ as cheife governour of the college. It does not consist with the honour I beare him and you, to go so precipitately to worke; no, not so much as to have any difference with you, if it can possibly be avoyded. Yet, as my sonn stands now, I cannot see with what credit he can be elected; for, being but sixth, and (as you are pleased to judge) not deserving that neither, I know not whether he may not go immediately to Cambridge, as well as one of his own election went to Oxford this yeare⁷ by your consent. I will say nothing of my second sonn, but that, after you had been pleased to advise me to waite on my Lord Bishop for his favour, I found he might have had the first place, if you had not opposed it; and I likewise found at the election,

⁶ Dr. John Dolben, who was translated from Rochester to York, in August, 1683. Our author, in the Postscript to his Translation of Virgil, has mentioned the kindness of the Archbishop's son, Gilbert Dolben, Esq. in giving him the various editions of that author.

⁷ The person meant was Robert Morgan, who was elected with Charles Dryden into the college of Westminster in 1680, and is the only one of those then admitted, who was elected to Oxford in 1682. That circumstance, therefore, ascertains the year when this letter was written.

that by the pains you had taken with him, he in some sort deserved it.

I hope, Sir, when you have given your selfe the trouble to read thus farr, you, who are a prudent man, will consider, that none complaine, but they desire to be reconciled at the same time: there is no mild expostulation at least, which does not intimate a kindness and respect in him who makes it. Be pleas'd, if there be no merit on my side, to make it your own act of grace to be what you were formerly to my sonn. I have done something, so far to conquer my own spirit as to ask it: and, indeed, I know not with what face to go to my Lord Bishop, and to tell him I am takeing away both my sonns; for though I shall tell him no occasion, it will looke like a disrespect to my old Master, of which I will not be guilty, if it be possible. I shall add no more, but hope I shall be so satisfiyed with a favourable answer from you, which I promise to my selfe from your goodnesse and moderation, that I shall still have occasion to continue,

Sir,

Your most obliged humble Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.*

* The Letters to Dr. Busby have been already made publick; but are here printed from the originals, which have been obligingly communicated by Mr. John Nichols, author of the History of Leicestershire.

LETTER V.

[TO LAURENCE HYDE, EARL OF ROCHESTER.⁹]

MY LORD, [*Perhaps, August, 1683.*]

I KNOW not whether my Lord Sunderland has interceded with your Lordship for half a yeare of my salary; but I have two other advocates, my extreme wants, even almost to arresting, and my ill health, which cannot be repaired without immediate retireing into the country. A quarter's allowance is but the Jesuites' powder to my disease; the fitt will return a fortnight hence. If I durst, I would plead a little merit, and some hazards of my life from the common enemyes; my refusing advantages offered by them, and neglecting my beneficiall studies, for the King's service: but I only thinke I merit not to sterve. I never apply'd myselfe to any interest contrary to your Lordship's; and on some occasions, perhaps not known

⁹ This letter is printed from a copy transmitted some years ago by Mr. John Elderton to the editor of the Gentleman's Magazine. Mr. Elderton supposed that it was written in 1673-4; but Butler being spoken of as dead, that could not be the date; for that poet died in September, 1680. The superscription has not been preserved; but it was doubtless addressed to Laurence Hyde, (second son of Lord Clarendon,) who was made First Commissioner of the Treasury in 1679, and continued Prime Minister till Sept. 1684. He was created Lord Hyde in April, 1681, and Earl of Rochester in Nov. 1682. Early in 1683, our author dedicated to him *THE DUKE OF GUISE*; and in 1692, his *CLEOMENES*.

to you, have not been unserviceable to the memory and reputation of my Lord, your father.¹ After this, my Lord, my conscience assures me I may write boldly, though I cannot speake to you. I have three sonns growing to man's estate; I breed them all up to learning, beyond my fortune; but they are too hopefull to be neglected, though I want. Be pleased to looke on me with an eye of compassion: some small employment would render my condition easy. The King is not unsatisfied of me; the Duke has often promised me his assistance; and your Lordship is the conduit through which their favours passe: either in the Customes, or the Appeals of the Excise,² or some other way, meanes cannot be wanting, if you please to have the will. 'Tis enough for one age to have neglected Mr. Cowley, and sterv'd Mr. Butler; but neither of them had the happiness to live till your Lordship's ministry. In the meane time, be pleased to give me a gracious and speedy answer to my present request of halfe a yeare's pention for my necessityes. I am going to write somewhat by his Majesty's command,³

¹ Edward, Earl of Clarendon. The work or passages here alluded to, I have not been able to discover.

² The place which our author here solicits, (worth only £.200. a year,) was the first office that Addison obtained, which he used to call "the *little thing* given me by Lord Halifax." Locke also, after the Revolution, was a Commissioner of Appeals.

³ Probably THE HISTORY OF THE LEAGUE, which was entered on the Stationers' Books early in 1684, and is there said to have been "Englised by his Majesties express command."

and cannot stirr into the country for my health and studies, till I secure my family from want. You have many petitions of this nature, and cannot satisfy all; but I hope, from your goodness, to be made an exception to your general rules,* because I am, with all sincerity,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient humble Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

LETTER VI.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.⁴

Monday Morning. [Sept. 1684.]

MR. TONSON,

THE two melons you sent I received before your letter, which came foure houres after: I tasted one of them, which was too good to need an excuse; the other is yet untouch'd. You have written

* This application was successful. See vol. ii. p. 223.

⁴ This letter was probably written in August or September, 1684; the recent loss which the Duke of Ormond is said to have sustained, being, I conceive, that of his wife, who died July 21, 1684. The Duke went to Ireland, as Lord Lieutenant, in the following month, and remained there till February in the ensuing year. Other circumstances mentioned agree with this date. The History of the League was published July 31, 1684, as appears from the London Gazette, No. 1951. Michaelmas is spoken of, as approaching; and our author was now employed in preparing the second volume of his MISCELLANIES, which appeared in Jan. 1684-5, or soon afterwards.

diverse things which gave me great satisfaction; particularly that the History of the League is commended: and I hope the onely thing I fear'd in it, is not found out. Take it all together, and I dare say without vanity, 'tis the best translation of any History in English, though I cannot say 'tis the best History; but that is no fault of mine. I am glad my Lord Duke of Ormond has one: I did not forget him; but I thought his sorrows were too fresh upon him to receive a present of that nature. For my Lord Roscommon's Essay,⁵ I am of your opinion that you should reprint it, and that you may safely venture on a thousand more. In my verses before it, pray let the printer mend his errour, and let the line stand thus:

That heer his conqu'ring ancestors were nurs'd;—*

Charles his copy⁶ is all true. The other faults my Lord Roscommon will mend in the booke, or Mr. Chetwood⁷ for him, if my Lord be gone for Ireland; of which, pray send me word.

Your opinion of the Miscellaneyes is likewise mine: I will for once lay by the RELIGIO LAICI,⁸

⁵ The first edition of Lord Roscommon's "Essay on Translated Verse," appeared in 1684, and a second edition was published by Jacob Tonson in 4to. probably about Christmas, in the same year, though it is dated 1685. That nobleman died in January, 1684-5.

* In the first edition it stood,

"That here his conqu'ring ancestors *was* nurs'd."

⁶ Latin Verses by Charles Dryden, prefixed to Lord Roscommon's Essay.

⁷ Knightly Chetwood, concerning whom see vol. iii.

till another time. But I must also add, that since we are to have nothing but new, I am resolv'd we will have nothing but good, whomever we disoblige. You will have of mine, four Odes of Horace, which I have already translated; another small translation of forty lines from Lucretius; the whole story of Nisus and Eurialus, both in the fifth and the ninth of Virgil's Eneids:⁹ and I care not who translates them beside me, for let him be friend or foe, I will please myself, and not give off in consideration of any man. There will be forty lines more of Virgil in another place, to answer those of Lucretius: I meane those very lines which Montaigne has compar'd in those two poets; and Homer shall sleep on for me,—I will not now meddle with him. And for the Act which remains of the Opera,¹ I believe I shall have no leysure to mind it, after I have done what I proposed: for my business here is to unweary my selfe, after my studyes, not to drudge.

I am very glad you have pay'd Mr. Jones, because he has carry'd him selfe so gentlemanlike to me; and, if ever it lyes in my power, I will requite it. I desire to know whether the Duke's

p. 547. He was much attached to Lord Roscommon, and wrote his Life.

⁸ As it was determined to insert nothing but what was new in the Second Miscellany, RELIGIO LAICI could not be admitted; for it had been published in 1682.

⁹ These translations accordingly appeared in the SECOND MISCELLANY.

¹ Probably ALBION and ALBANIUS, which was afterwards completed and ready to be performed in Feb. 1684-5.

House are makeing cloaths and putting things in a readiness for the singing Opera, to be play'd immediately after Michaelmasse.² For the actors in the two playes³ which are to be acted of mine this winter, I had spoken with Mr. Betterton by chance at the Coffee-house the afternoon before I came away; and I believe that the persons were all agreed on, to be just the same you mention'd; onely Octavia was to be Mrs. Butler, in case Mrs. Cooke were not on the stage: and I know not whether Mrs. Percivall, who is a comedian, will do well for Benzayda.

I came hither for health, and had a kind of hectic feavour for a fortnight of the time: I am now much better. Poore Jack* is not yet recover'd of an intermitting feavour, of which this is the twelfth day; but he mends, and now begins to eat flesh: to add to this, my man with over-care of him, is fallen ill too, of the same distemper; so that I am deep in doctors, 'pothecaries, and nurses: but though many in this country fall sick of feavours, few or none dye. Your friend, Charles,† continues well. If you have any extraordinary newes, I should be glad to heare it. I will answer Mr. Butler's letter next week; for it requires no hast.

I am Yours, JOHN DRYDEN.

² I suppose, the Opera of KING ARTHUR, to which ALBION AND ALBANIUS was originally intended to have been a prelude. See vol. ii. p. 164. Both these pieces were performed, at different times, at the *Queen's Theatre* in Dorset Garden, as it was then denominated; though, from old habit, our author here calls it the *Duke's House*.

³ ALL FOR LOVE, and THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

* His second son.

† His eldest son.

LETTER VII.

FROM JACOB TONSON TO JOHN DRYDEN, ESQ.

[Probably written in Jan. or Feb. 1692-3.]⁴

SIR,

I HAVE here returned y^e Ovid, w^{ch} I read wth a great deal of pleasure, and think nothing can be more entertaining; but by this letter you find I am not soe well satisfied as perhaps you might think. I hope at y^e same time the matter of fact I lay down in this letter will appear grounds for it, and w^{ch} I beg you wou'd concider of; and then I believe I shall at least bee excused.

You may please, S^r, to remember that upon my first proposal about y^e 3^d Missellany, I offer'd fifty pounds, and talk'd of several authours, without naming Ovid. You ask'd if it shou'd not be guynneas, and said I shou'd not repent it; upon w^{ch} I imediately comply'd, and left it wholly to you what, and for y^e quantity too: and I declare it was the farthest in y^e world from my thoughts that by leaving it to you I shoud have the less. Thus the case stood, when you went into Essex. After I came out of Northamptonshire I wrote to you, and reseived a Letter dated Monday Oct. 3^d, 92,

⁴ The THIRD MISCELLANY, to which this letter seems to relate, was published in July, 1693. I suspect, when this letter was written, it had not yet appeared.

from w^{ch} letter I now write word for word what followes :

“ I am translating about six hundred lines, or
 “ somewhat less, of y^e first book of the Meta-
 “ morphoses. If I cannot get my price, w^{ch} shall
 “ be twenty guynneas, I will translate the whole
 “ book ; w^{ch} coming out before the whole transla-
 “ tion will spoyle Tate's undertakings. 'Tis one of
 “ the best I have ever made, and very pleasant.
 “ This, wth Heroe and Leander, and the piece of
 “ Homer, (or, if it be not enough, I will add more,)
 “ will make a good part of a Missellany.”

Those, S^r, are y^e very words, and y^e onely ones in that letter relating to that affair ; and y^e monday following you came to town.—After your arrivall you shew'd Mr. Motteaux what you had done, (w^{ch} he told me was to y^e end of y^e Story of Daphnis,) [Daphne,] and demanded, as you mention'd in your letter, twenty guynneas, w^{ch} that bookseller refus'd. Now, S^r, I the rather believe there was just soe much done, by reason y^e number of lines you mention in yo^r letter agrees wth y^e quantity of lines that soe much of y^e first book makes ; w^{ch} upon counting y^e Ovid I find to be in y^e Lattin 566, in y^e English 759 ; and y^e Bookseller told me there was noe more demanded of him for it.—Now, S^r, what I entreat you wou'd please to consider of is this : that it is reasonable for me to expect at least as much favour from you as a strange bookseller ; and I will never believe y^e it can be in yo^r nature to use one y^e worse for leaveing it to you ; and

if the matter of fact as I state it be true, (and upon my word what I mention I can shew you in yo' letter,) then pray, S^r, consider how much dearer I pay then you offered it to y^e other bookseller; for he might have had to y^e end of y^e Story of Daphnis for 20 guynneas, w^{ch} is in yo' translation 759 lines;

And then suppose 20 guynneas more

for the same number 759 lines,

that makes for 40 guynneas 1518 lines;
and all that I have for fifty guynneas are but 1446;
soe that, if I have noe more, I pay 10 guynneas above 40, and have 72 lines less for fifty, in proportion, than the other bookseller shou'd have had for 40, at y^e rate you offered him y^e first part. This is, Sir, what I shall take as a great favour if you please to think of. I had intentions of letting you know this before; but till I had paid y^e money, I would not ask to see y^e book, nor count the lines, least it shou'd look like a design of not keeping my word. When you have looked over y^e rest of what you have already translated, I desire you would send it; and I own y^e if you don't think fit to add something more, I must submit: 'tis wholly at yo' choice, for I left it intirely to you; but I believe you cannot imagine I expected soe little; for you were pleased to use me much kindlyer in Juvenall, w^{ch} is not reckon'd soe easy to translate as Ovid. S^r, I humbly beg yo' pardon for this long letter, and upon my word I had rather have yo' good will than any

man's alive; and, whatever you are pleas'd to doe;
will alway acknowledge my self, S^r,

Yo^r most obliged humble Serv^t,

J. TONSON.

LETTER VIII.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.⁵

MR. TONSON,

August 30. [1693.]

I AM much asham'd of my self, that I am so much behind-hand with you in kindness. Above all things I am sensible of your good nature, in bearing me company to this place, wherein, besides the cost, you must needs neglect your own business; but I will endeavour to make you some amends; and therefore I desire you to command me something for your service. I am sure you thought my Lord Radclyffe⁶ wou'd have done something: I gness'd more truly, that he cou'd not; but I was too far ingag'd to desist; though I was tempted to it, by the melancholique prospect I had of it. I have

⁵ The author was at this time in Northamptonshire. The particular place from which he writes, is not easily ascertained. It is not Oundle, nor Tichmarsh; nor was he at Canons-Ashby; for he was not on good terms with his kinsman, Sir Robert Driden.

The original has no date but *August 30th*; but the year is ascertained by the reference to the THIRD MISCELLANY, which was published in July, 1693.

⁶ To whom the THIRD MISCELLANY is dedicated.—Some account of him may be found in vol. iii. p. 269.

translated six hundred lines of Ovid ; but I believe I shall not compasse his 772 lines under nine hundred or more of mine.—This time I cannot write to my wife, because he who is to carry my letter to Oundle, will not stay till I can write another. Pray, Sir, let her know that I am well ; and for feare the few damsins shoud be all gone, desire her to buy me a sieve-full, to preserve whole, and not in mash.

I intend to come up at least a week before Michaelmass ; for Sir Matthew⁷ is gone abroad, I suspect a wooeing, and his caleche is gone with him : so that I have been but thrice at Tichmarsh, of which you were with me once. This dissapointment makes the place wearysome to me, which otherwise wou'd be pleasant.

About a fortnight ago I had an intimation from a friend by letter, that one of the Secretaries, I suppose Trenchard,⁸ had inform'd the Queen, that I had abus'd her Government, (those were the words) in my Epistle to my Lord Radcliffe ; and that thereupon, she had commanded her Historiographer, Rymer, to fall upon my playes ; which he assures me is now doeing. I doubt not his malice, from a former hint you gave me ; and if he be employ'd, I am confident 'tis of his own seeking ; who, you know, has spoken slightly of me in his last

⁷ I have not been able to discover who was the person here meant. Our author writes perhaps from his house.

⁸ Sir John Trenchard, who was made one of the Secretaries of State, March 23, 1691-2, and held that office till his death, in April, 1695.

critique:⁹ and that gave me occasion to snarl againe.¹⁰ In your next, let me know what you can learn of this matter. I am Mr. Congreve's true lover, and desire you to tell him, how kindly I take his often remembrances of me: I wish him all prosperity, and hope I shall never loose his affection; nor yours, Sir, as being

Your most faithfull,

And much obliged Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

I had all your Letters.

Sir Matthew had your book, when he came home last; and desir'd me to give you his acknowledgments.

LETTER IX.

TO MR. JOHN DENNIS.

[*Probably, March, 1693-4.*]

MY DEAR MR. DENNIS,

WHEN I read a letter so full of my commendations as your last,² I cannot but consider you as

⁹ "A short View of Tragedy," published (as appears from the Gentleman's Journal, by P. Motteux,) in Dec. 1692. The date in the titlepage is, 1693.

¹ In the dedication to Lord Radcliffe. See vol. iii. p. 269.

² The Letter referred to was as follows:

TO MR. DRYDEN.

"DEAR SIR,

"You may see already by this presumptuous greeting, that encouragement gives as much assurance to friendship, as it imparts to love. You may see too, that a friend may

the master of a vast treasure, who having more than enough for yourself, are forc'd to ebb out

sometimes proceed to acknowledge affection, by the very same degrees by which a lover declares his passion. This last at first confesses esteem, yet owns no passion but admiration. But as soon as he is animated by one kind expression, his look, his style, and his very soul are altered. But as sovereign beauties know very well, that he who confesses he esteems and admires them, implies that he loves them, or is inclin'd to love them; a person of Mr. Dryden's exalted genius, can discern very well, that when we esteem him highly, 'tis respect restrains us, if we say no more. For where great esteem is without affection, 'tis often attended with envy, if not with hate; which passions detract even when they commend, and silence is their highest panegyrick. 'Tis indeed impossible, that I should refuse to love a man, who has so often given me all the pleasure that the most insatiable mind can desire: when at any time I have been dejected by disappointments, or tormented by cruel passions, the recourse to your verses has calm'd my soul, or rais'd it to transports which made it contemn tranquillity. But though you have so often given me all the pleasure I was able to bear, I have reason to complain of you on this account, that you have confined my delight to a narrower compass. Suckling, Cowley, and Denham, who formerly ravish'd me in every part of them, now appear tasteless to me in most; and Waller himself, with all his gallantry, and all that admirable art of his turns, appears three quarters prose to me. Thus 'tis plain, that your Muse has done me an injury; but she has made me amends for it. For she is like those extraordinary women, who, besides the regularity of their charming features, besides their engaging wit, have secret, unaccountable, enchanting graces;

upon your friends. You have indeed the best right to give them, since you have them in pro-

which though they have been long and often enjoy'd, make them always new and always desirable.—I return you my hearty thanks for your most obliging letter. I had been very unreasonable, if I had repin'd that the favour arriv'd no sooner. 'Tis allowable to grumble at the delaying a payment; but to murmur at the deferring a benefit, is to be impudently ungrateful beforehand. The commendations which you give me, exceedingly sooth my vanity. For you with a breath can bestow or confirm reputation; a whole numberless people proclaims the praise which you give, and the judgments of three mighty kingdoms appear to depend upon yours. The people gave me some little applause before; but to whom, when they are in the humour, will they not give it; and to whom, when they are froward, will they not refuse it? Reputation with them depends upon chance, unless they are guided by those above them. They are but the keepers, as it were, of the lottery which Fortune sets up for renown; upon which Fame is bound to attend with her trumpet, and sound when men draw the prizes. Thus I had rather have your approbation than the applause of Fame. Her commendation argues good luck, but Mr. Dryden's implies desert. Whatever low opinion I have hitherto had of my self, I have so great a value for your judgment, that, for the sake of that, I shall be willing henceforward to believe that I am not wholly desertless; but that you may find me still more supportable, I shall endeavour to compensate whatever I want in those glittering qualities, by which the world is dazled, with truth, with faith, and with zeal to serve you; qualities which for their rarity, might be objects of wonder, but that men dare not appear to admire them, because their admiration would manifestly

priety; but they are no more mine when I receive them, than the light of the moon can be allowed to be her own, who shines but by the reflexion of her brother. Your own poetry is a more powerful example, to prove that the modern writers may enter into comparison with the ancients, than any which Perrault could produce in France; yet neither he, nor you, who are a better critick, can persuade me, that there is any room left for a solid commendation at this time of day, at least for me.

If I undertake the translation of Virgil, the little which I can perform will shew at least, that no man is fit to write after him, in a barbarous modern tongue. Neither will his machines be of any service to a christian poet. We see how ineffectually they have been try'd by Tasso, and by Ariosto. 'Tis using them too dully, if we only make devils of his gods: as if, for example, I would raise a storm, and make use of *Æolus*, with this only difference of calling him Prince of the air; what invention of mine would there be in

declare their want of them. Thus, Sir, let me assure you that though you are acquainted with several gentlemen, whose eloquence and wit may capacitate them to offer their service with more address to you, yet no one can declare himself, with greater chearfulness, or with greater fidelity, or with more profound respect than my self.

Sir,

March 3. [1693-4.]

Your most, &c.

JOHN DENNIS.

this? or who would not see Virgil thorough me; only the same trick play'd over again by a bungling juggler? Boileau has well observed, that it is an easie matter in a christian poem, for God to bring the Devil to reason. I think I have given a better hint for new machines in my preface to Juvenal; where I have particularly recommended two subjects, one of King Arthur's conquest of the Saxons, and the other of the Black Prince in his conquest of Spain. But the Guardian Angels of monarchys and kingdoms are not to be touch'd by every hand: a man must be deeply conversant in the Platonick philosophy, to deal with them; and therefore I may reasonably expect that no poet of our age will presume to handle those machines, for fear of discovering his own ignorance; or if he should, he might perhaps be ingrateful enough not to own me for his benefactour.³

After I have confess'd thus much of our modern heroick poetry, I cannot but conclude with Mr. Rymer, that our English comedy is far beyond any thing of the Ancients: and notwithstanding our irregularities, so is our tragedy.⁴ Shakspeare had a genius for it; and we know, in spite of Mr. Rymer, that genius alone is a greater virtue (if I may

³ Dryden here seems to have had a presentiment of what afterwards happened. See vol. iii. p. 647.

⁴ Our author has maintained the same opinion in the Dedication of the THIRD MISCELLANY; and so, I have no doubt, Aristotle would have decided, had he lived in our time.

so call it) than all other qualifications put together. You see what success this learned critick has found in the world, after his blaspheming Shakspeare.⁵ Almost all the faults which he has discover'd are truly there; yet who will read Mr. Rymer, or not read Shakspeare? For my own part I reverence Mr. Rymer's learning, but I detest his ill-nature and his arrogance. I indeed, and such as I, have reason to be afraid of him, but Shakspeare has not.

There is another part of poetry, in which the English stand almost upon an equal foot with the Ancients; and it is that which we call Pindarique; introduced, but not perfected, by our famous Mr. Cowley: and of this, Sir, you are certainly one of the greatest masters. You have the sublimity of sense as well as sound, and know how far the boldness of a poet may lawfully extend. I could wish you would cultivate this kind of Ode; and reduce it either to the same measures which Pindar used, or give new measures of your own. For, as it is, it looks like a vast tract of land newly discover'd: the soil is wonderfully fruitful, but unmanur'd; overstock'd with inhabitants, but almost all savages, without laws, arts, arms, or policy.

I remember, poor Nat. Lee, who was then upon the verge of madness, yet made a sober and a witty answer to a bad poet, who told him, *It was an easie thing to write like a madman*: No, said he, *it is*

⁵ In his *Short View of Tragedy*, 8vo. 1693.

very difficult to write like a madman, but it is a very easie matter to write like a fool. Otway and he are safe by death from all attacks, but we poor poets militant (to use Mr. Cowley's expression) are at the mercy of wretched scribblers: and when they cannot fasten upon our verses, they fall upon our morals, our principles of state and religion. For my principles of religion, I will not justifie them to you: I know yours are far different. For the same reason I shall say nothing of my principles of state. I believe you in yours follow the dictates of your reason, as I in mine do those of my conscience. If I thought my self in an errour, I would retract it. I am sure that I suffer for them; and Milton makes even the Devil say, that no creature is in love with pain. For my morals betwixt man and man, I am not to be my own judge. I appeal to the world, if I have deceiv'd or defrauded any man: and for my private conversation, they who see me every day can be the best witnesses, whether or no it be blameless and inoffensive. Hitherto I have no reason to complain that men of either party shun my company. I have never been an impudent beggar at the doors of noblemen: my visits have indeed been too rare to be unacceptable; and but just enough to testifie my gratitude for their bounty, which I have frequently received, but always unasked, as themselves will witness.

I have written more than I needed to you on this subject; for I dare say you justifie me to your

self. As for that which I first intended for the principal subject of this letter, which is my friend's passion and his design of marriage, on better consideration I have chang'd my mind: for having had the honour to see my dear friend Wycherly's letter to him on that occasion, I find nothing to be added or amended. But as well as I love Mr. Wycherly, I confess I love my self so well, that I will not shew how much I am inferiour to him in wit and judgment, by undertaking any thing after him. There is Moses and the Prophets in his council. Jupiter and Juno, as the poets tell us, made Tiresias their umpire in a certain merry dispute, which fell out in heaven betwixt them. Tiresias, you know, had been of both sexes, and therefore was a proper judge; our friend Mr. Wycherly is full as competent an arbitrator: he has been a bachelor, and marry'd man, and is now a widower. Virgil says of Ceneus,

—— Nunc vir, nunc fœmina, Ceneus,
Rursus et in veterem fato revoluta figuram.

Yet I suppose he will not give any large commendations to his middle state: nor as the sailer said, will be fond after a shipwreck to put to sea again. If my friend will adventure after this, I can but wish him a good wind, as being his, and,

My dear Mr. Dennis,

Your most affectionate
and most faithful Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

LETTER X.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

Wednesday morning.

[*Probably written in April, 1695.*⁶]

MR. TONSON,

"Tis now three dayes since I have ended the fourth Eneid; and I am this morning beginning to transcribe it; as you may do afterwards; for I am willing some few of my friends may see it, and shall give leave to you, to shew your transcription to some others, whose names I will tell you. The paying Ned Sheldon the fifty pounds put me upon this speed; but I intend not so much to overtoil myself, after the sixth book is ended. If the second subscriptions rise,⁷ I will take so much the

⁶ Scarcely any of the letters to Tonson have the date of the year; and it is only from circumstances that we can form any probable conjecture concerning the time when they were written. I am therefore by no means sure that I have in every instance arranged them rightly. As Dryden began his translation of Virgil in the middle of 1694, and here says that he had finished the *fourth* Æneid, I suppose this letter to have been written in April or May, 1695.—The payment for each Æneid appears to have been fifty pounds.

⁷ From an advertisement in the London Gazette, No. 3559, Dec. 21, 1699, relative to Collier's "Great Historical Dictionary," it appears to have been the practice to fix a day, after which no subscription for a book should be re-

more time, because the profit will encourage me the more; if not, I must make the more hast; yet allways with as much care as I am able. But however, I will not fail in my paines of translating the sixth Eneid with the same exactness as I have performed the fourth: because that book is my greatest favourite. You know money is now very scrupulously receiv'd: in the last which you did me the favour to change for my wife, besides the clip'd money, there were at least forty shillings brass. You may, if you please, come to me at the Coffee-house this afternoon, or at farthest to-morrow, that we may take care together, where and when I may receive the fifty pounds and the guineys; which must be some time this week.

I am your Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

I have written to my Lord Lawderdail, for his decorations.*

ceived at the price originally proposed; those who subscribed after that day being obliged to pay an advanced price, of which notice was given in the proposals. Non-subscribers, probably, paid still more. Perhaps something of this sort is here alluded to.

* See the next Note.

LETTER XI.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

Saturday, June the 8th. [f. 1695.]

MR. TONSON,

'Tis now high time for me to think of my second subscriptions: for the more time I have for collecting them, the larger they are like to be. I have now been idle just a fortnight; and therefore might have call'd sooner on you, for the remainder of the first subscriptions. And besides, Mr. Aston will be going into Cheshire a week hence, who is my onely help, and to whom you are onely beholding for makeing the bargain betwixt us, which is so much to my loss; but I repent nothing of it that is pass'd, but that I do not find myself capable of translating so great an authour, and therefore feare to lose my own credit, and to hazard your profit, which it wou'd grieve me if you shoud loose, by your too good opinion of my abilities. I expected to have heard of you this week, according to the intimation you gave me of it; but that failing, I must defer it no

* The first subscribers to our author's translation of Virgil, paid five guineas each. Two of these I suspect Tonson retained, to defray the expence of the copper-plates; each of which was dedicated to a subscriber, and decorated with his arms. The second subscription was, I believe, two guineas, and perhaps was an after-thought.

longer than till the ensuing week, because Mr. Aston will afterwards be gone, if not sooner.

Be pleased to send me word what day will be most convenient to you; and be ready with the price of paper, and of the books.¹ No matter for any dinner; for that is a charge to you,² and I care not for it. Mr. Congreve may be with us, as a common friend; for as you know him for yours, I make not the least doubt, but he is much more mine: send an immediate answer, and you shall find me ready to do all things w^{ch} become

Your Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

LETTER XII.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

Wednesday, the 13th of 7ber [f. 1695.]

MY GOOD FRIEND,

THIS is onely to acquaint you, that I have taken my place in the Oundle coach for Tuesday next;

¹ This seems to relate only to the additional number of copies, which were to be printed (probably on small paper,) for the *second* subscribers. The copies on large paper were, I suppose, appropriated to the subscribers of five guineas.

² It was formerly the custom to settle all agreements between authors and booksellers, (as well as various other contracts,) at taverns; and the bargain was never concluded without either a *whet* or a dinner. In some of

and hope to be at London on Wednesday night. I had not confidence enough to hope Mr. Southern and Mr. Congreve would have given me the favour of their company for the last four miles; but since they will be so kind to a friend of theirs, who so truly loves both them and you, I will please myself with expecting it, if the weather be not so bad as to hinder them.

I assure you I lay up your last kindnesses to me in my heart; and the less I say of them, I charge them to account so much the more; being very sensible that I have not hitherto deserv'd them. Having been obliged to sit up all last night almost, out of civility to strangers, who were benighted, and to resign my bed to them, I am sleepy all this day: and if I had not taken a very lusty pike³ that day, they must have gone supperless to bed, four ladies and two gentlemen; for Mr. Dudley and I were alone, with but one man, and no mayd, in the house.—This time I cannot write to my wife; do me the favour to let her know I receiv'd her letter, am well, and hope to be with her on Wednesday next, at night. No more but that

I am very much

Your Friend and Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

the city taverns, several dozens of wine were often consumed in a morning in half-pint whets.

³ Our author's love of fishing has already been noticed. See vol. i. part i. p. 520.

LETTER XIII.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

October the 29th. [f. 1695.]

MR. TONSON,

SOME kind of intercourse must be carry'd on betwixt us, while I am translating Virgil. Therefore I give you notice, that I have done the seventh Eneid in the country;⁴ and intend some few days hence, to go upon the eight: when that is finish'd, I expect fifty pounds in good silver; not such as I have had formerly. I am not oblig'd to take gold,⁵ neither will I; nor stay for it beyond four and twenty houres after it is due. I thank you for the civility of your last letter in the country; but the thirty shillings upon every book remains with me. You always intended I should get nothing by the second subscriptions, as I found from first to last. And your promise to Mr. Congreve, that you had found a way for my benefit,

⁴ At Burleigh, the seat of John, the fifth Earl of Exeter.

⁵ Both the gold and silver coin were at this time much depreciated; and remained in that state till a new coinage took place, under the care of Charles Montague, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. It appears from a subsequent letter, that, before the new coinage, the value of a guinea was fluctuating and uncertain.

which was an encouragement to my pains, came at last, for me to desire Sir Godfrey Kneller and Mr. Closterman to gather for me. I then told Mr. Congreve, that I knew you too well to believe you meant me any kindness; and he promised me to believe accordingly of you, if you did not. But this is past; and you shall have your bargain, if I live and have my health. You may send me word what you have done in my business with the Earl of Derby: and I must have a place for the Duke of Devonshyre.⁶ Some of your friends will be glad to take back their three guineys.⁷ The Countess of Macclesfield gave her money to Will Plowden before Christmas; but he remember'd it not, and payd it not in. Mr. Aston tells me, my Lord Derby expects but one book. I find, my Lord Chesterfield and my Lord Petre are both left out; but my Lady Macclesfield must have a place;⁸ if I can possibly; and Will Plowden shall pay you in three guineys, if I can obtain so much favour from you. I desire

⁶ Among the subscribers to the plates, one of which the author wished to be decorated with the Duke's arms, and dedicated to him. The engraving prefixed to the Third Æneid was inscribed to the Earl of Derby; but the name of the Duke of Devonshire does not appear in either the first or second List of Subscribers.

⁷ On receiving back three guineas, they would be placed in the List of Second Subscribers.

⁸ The engraving prefixed to the Twelfth Æneid is inscribed to Philip, Earl of Chesterfield; but neither Lord Petre, nor Lady Macclesfield, *has a place*.

neither excuses nor reasons from you: for I am but too well satisfy'd already. The Notes and Prefaces shall be short; because you shall get the more by saving paper.

JOHN DRYDEN.

LETTER XIV.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

Friday Night. [f. Dec. 1695.]

MR. TONSON,

MEETING Sir Robert Howard at the play-house this morning, and asking him how he lik'd my seaventh Eneid, he told me you had not brought it. He goes out of town to-morrow, being Saturday, after dinner. I desire you not to fail of carrying my manuscript for him to read in the country; and desire him to bring it up with him, when he comes next to town. I doubt you have not yet been with my Lord Chesterfield, and am in pain about it.

Yours

JOHN DRYDEN.

When you have leysure, I shou'd be glad to see how Mr. Congreve and you have worded my propositions for Virgil.⁹ When my sonne's play¹ is

⁹ Perhaps the propositions for the *second* subscription. See Letter xi.

¹ THE HUSBAND HIS OWN CUCKOLD, written by our author's second son, John, and published in July, 1696.

acted, I intend to translate again, if my health continue. Some time next week let me heare from you, concerning the Propositions.

LETTER XV.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

Friday forenoon. [f. Feb. 1695-6.]

SIR,

I RECEIV'D your letter very kindly, because indeed I expected none; but thought you as very a tradesman as Bentley,² who has curs'd our Virgil so heartily. I shall loose enough by your bill upon Mr. Knight; for after having taken it all in silver, and not in half-crowns neither, but shillings and sixpences, none of the money will go; for which reason I have sent it all back again, and as the less loss will receive it in guineys at 29 shillings each. 'Tis troublesome to be a looser, but it was my own fault to accept it this way, which I did to avoyd more trouble.

I am not sorry that you will not allow any thing towards the Notes; for to make them good, wou'd have cost me half a yeare's time at least. Those I write shall be only marginall, to help the unlearned, who understand not the poetickall fables. The Prefaces, as I intend them, will be somewhat more learned. It wou'd require seaven yeares to

² Richard Bentley, a bookseller and printer, who lived in Russel Street, Covent Garden.

translate Virgil exactly. But I promise you once more to do my best in the four remaining books, as I have hitherto done in the foregoing.—Upon triall I find all of your trade are sharpeners, and you not more than others; therefore I have not wholly left you. Mr. Aston does not blame you for getting as good a bargain as you cou'd, though I cou'd have gott an hundred pounds more: and you might have spared almost all your trouble, if you had thought fit to publish the proposalls for the first subscriptions; for I have guineas offer'd me every day, if there had been room;³ I believe, modestly speaking, I have refus'd already 25. I mislike nothing in your letter therefore, but onely your upbraiding me with the publique encouragement, and my own reputation concern'd in the notes; when I assure you I cou'd not make them to my mind in less than half a year's time. Get the first half of Virgil transcribed as soon as possibly you can; that I may put the notes to it; and you may have the other four books which lye ready for you, when you bring the former; that the press may stay as little as possibly it can. My Lord Chesterfield has been to visite me, but I durst say nothing of Virgil to him, for feare there shou'd be no void place for him: if there be, let me know; and tell me whether you have made room for the Duke of Devonshire.⁴ Haveing no silver by me, I desire my Lord Derby's money, deducting your own. And let it be good, if you

³ See p. 40, n. 9.

⁴ See p. 44, n. 6.

desire to oblige me, who am not your enemy, and
may be your friend,

JOHN DRYDEN.

Let me heare from you as speedily as you can.

LETTER XVI.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

May 26th [1696.]

SEND word, if you please, Sir, what is the most
you will give for my sonn's play,⁵ that I may take
the fairest chapman, as I am bound to do for his
benefit: and if you have any silver which will go,
my wife will be glad of it. I lost thirty shillings
or more by the last payment of fifty pounds,
w^{ch} you made at Mr. Knights.⁷

Yours,

J. DRYDEN.

Sir Ro: Howard⁶ writt me word, that if I cou'd
make any advantage by being paid in clipp'd mo-
ney, he woud change it in the Exchequer.

⁵ See p. 45, n. 1. It was printed for Jacob Tonson,
and published in 1696.

⁶ Sir Robert Howard had been appointed Auditor of
the Exchequer, in 1673, and held that office till his death.

⁷ Probably a goldsmith, and well known afterwards as
the Cashier of the South-sea Company.

LETTER XVII.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

Thursday Morning. [f. Aug. 1696.]

MR. TONSON,

I HAD yesterday morning two watches sent me by Mr. Tompion,⁷ which I am to send my sonnes this week.⁸ I cou'd not persuade him to take gold at any rate: but he will take a goldsmiths bill for two and twenty pounds, which is their price. I desire you wou'd give him such a bill, and abate it out of the next fifty pounds which you are to pay me, when Virgil is finish'd. Ten Eneids are finish'd, and the ninth and tenth written out in my own hand. You may have them with the eight, which is in a foul copy, when you please to call for them, and to bring those which are transcrib'd. Mr. Tompion's man will be with me at four o'clock in the afternoon, and bring the watches, and must be payd at sight. I desire you therefore to procure a goldsmiths bill, and let me have it before that houre, and send an answer by my boy.

Yours,

JOHN DRYDEN.

⁷ The celebrated watchmaker, who was originally a jacksmith.

⁸ They were at this time at Rome.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

*Wednesday afternoon.**From the Coffee-house. Nov. 25th.**

MR. TONSON,

I HAVE the remainder of my Northamptonshyre rents come up this weeke, and desire the favour of you to receive them for me, from the carrier of Tocester, who lodges at the Castle in Smithfield. I suppose it is the same man from whom you lately receiv'd them for my wife. Any time before ten o'clock to-morrow morning will serve the turne. If I were not deeply ingaged in my studyes, which will be finish'd in a day or two, I wou'd not put you to this trouble. I have inclos'd my tenant's letter to me, for you to shew the carrier, and to testify the summ, which is sixteen pounds and about tenn shillings; which the letter sets down. Pray, Sir, give in an acquittance for so much receiv'd, as I suppose you did last time.

I am,

Your very faithfull Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

* The only circumstance mentioned in this letter, on which a conjecture concerning the year when it was written can be grounded, is the writer's intimation that his studies would be finished in a day or two; which perhaps relates to the conclusion of his Virgil. I have therefore supposed it to be written in 1696.

LETTER XIX.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

[f. Jan. 1696-7.]

SIR,

ACCORDING to my promise, I have sent you all that is properly yours of my translation.¹ I desire, as you offer'd, that it shou'd be transcribed in a legible hand; and then sent back to me, for the last review. As for some notes on the margins, they are not every where; and when they are, are imperfect; so that you ought not to transcribe them, till I make them compleat. I feare you can scarcely make any thing of my foul copy; but it is the best I have. You see, my hand fails me, and therefore I write so short a letter. What I wrote yesterday was too sharp;² but I doubt it is all true. Your boy's coming upon so unseasonable a visit, as if you were frighted for yourself, discomposed me.

¹ The translation perhaps was sent to the press, when the first eight books of the *Æneid* were finished. This letter probably accompanied the last two books: for the ninth and tenth had been previously sent. See p. 49. The work having been published early in July, 1697, I have assigned January, 1696-7, as a probable date to it.

² This letter does not appear. It could not be the *sharp* letter already printed, which has been numbered xiii., because, when that was written, only seven books of the *Æneid* were translated,

Transcribe on very large paper, and leave a very large margin.

Send your boy for the foul copies, and he shall have them; for it will not satisfy me to send them by my own servant.

I cannot yet find the first sheet of the first *Eneid*. If it be lost, I will translate it over again:* but perhaps it may be amongst the loose papers. The fourth and ninth *Eclogues*, which I have sent, are corrected in my wife's printed *Miscellany*.³

LETTER XX.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

Tuesday morning, July the 6th, 1697.

MR. TONSON,

I DESIRE you wou'd let Mr. Pate⁴ know, I can print no more names of his subscribers than I have money for, before I print their names. He has

* These few words furnish a strong proof of the equality of Dryden's temper.

³ I suppose Lady Elizabeth Dryden's copy of the first part of his *Miscellany*, published in 1684, which contained a translation of the *Eclogues* of Virgil.

⁴ This person in the last age was frequently called "the learned tradesman."—"Sir Andrew Fountaine," (says Swift, in his *JOURNAL*, Oct. 6, 1710,) "came this morning, and caught me writing in bed. I went into the City with him, and we dined at the Chop-house, with Will Pate, the learned woollen-draper: then we sauntered at China-shops and booksellers; went to the tavern, and drank two

my acknowledgment of ten guineas receiv'd from him; and, as I told you, I owe him for above three yards of fine cloath: let him reckon for it; and then there will remain the rest for me, out of the ten more names w^{ch} he has given in. If he has not money by him, let him blott out as many of his names as he thinks good; and print onely those for which he pays or strikes off, in adjusting the accounts betwixt me and him. This is so reasonable on both sides, that he cannot refuse it; but I wou'd have things ended now, because I am

pints of white wine," &c. Mr. William Pate was educated at Trinity Hall in Cambridge, where he took the degree of B. C. L. He died in 1746, and was buried at Lee, in Kent, where the following epitaph is inscribed upon his tombstone :

Hic jacent reliquiae

GULIELMI PATE,

Viri

Propter ingenii fecunditatem

Et literarum peritiam

Haud minus eximii,

Quam ob morum urbanitatem suavitatemque,

Dilecti.

Hunc lapidem,

Sequenti apothegmate aureo incisum,

Tumulo imponi jussit :

Epicharnian illud teneto,

Nervos atque artus esse sapientiae

NON TEMERE CREDERE.

Obiit nono die Decembris,

Anno ætatis suæ octogesimo;

Æræ Christianæ

M DCC XLVI.

to deal with a draper, who is of my own perswasion,⁵ and to whom I have promis'd my custome.

Yours, JOHN DRYDEN.

I have sent to my tailour, and he sends me word, that I had three yards and half elle of cloath from Mr. Pate: I desire he wou'd make his price; and deduct so much as it comes to, and make even for the rest with ready money; as also that he would send word, what the name was, for whom Sam Atkins left him to make account for.

LETTER XXI.⁶

TO HIS SONS AT ROME.

Sept. the 3d, our style, [1697.]

DEAR SONS,

BEING now at Sir William Bowyer's⁷ in the country, I cannot write at large, because I find my self somewhat indisposed with a cold, and am

⁵ Our author, it should be remembered, at this time, was a Roman Catholick.

⁶ The original of this letter is preserved in the Lambeth Library, No. 933; GIBSON'S PAPERS, vol. i. p. 56. It was kindly imparted to the publick by the Reverend Dr. Vyse, who furnished Dr. Johnson with a transcript of it.

⁷ At Denham-Court in Buckinghamshire. Sir William Bowyer married a kinswoman of Lady Elizabeth Dryden; Frances, daughter of Charles, Lord Cranbourne, eldest son of William, the second Earl of Salisbury.

thick of hearing, rather worse than I was in town. I am glad to find, by your letter of July 26th, your style, that you are both in health; but wonder you should think me so negligent as to forget to give you an account of the ship in which your parcel is to come. I have written to you two or three letters concerning it, which I have sent by safe hands; as I told you; and doubt not but you have them before this can arrive to you. Being out of town, I have forgotten the ship's name, which your mother will enquire, and put it into her letter, which is joined with mine. But the master's name I remember: he is called Mr. Ralph Thorp; the ship is bound to Leghorn, consigned to Mr. Peter and Mr. Tho. Ball, merchants. I am of your opinion, that by Tonson's means almost all our letters have miscarried for this last year. But, however, he has missed of his design in the dedication, though he had prepared the book for it;* for in every figure of Eneas he has caused him to be drawn like King William, with a hooked nose.[†]

After my return to town, I intend to alter a play

* The translation of Virgil. See p. 57, n. 9.

† In MS. Harl. p. 35, in the Museum, are the following verses, occasioned by this circumstance:

‘ To be published in the next edition of Dryden's Virgil.

“ Old Jacob by deep judgment sway'd,

“ To please the wise beholders,

“ Has placed old Nassau's hook-nosed head

“ On poor Æneas' shoulders.

of Sir Robert Howard's, written long since, and lately put by him into my hands : 'tis called *THE CONQUEST OF CHINA BY THE TARTARS*. It will cost me six weeks' study, with the probable benefit of an hundred pounds. In the mean time I am writing a Song for St. Cecilia's Feast, who, you know, is the patroness of musick. This is troublesome, and no way beneficial ; but I could not deny the Stewards of the Feast, who came in a body to me to desire that kindness, one of them being Mr. Bridgman, whose parents are your mother's friends. I hope to send you thirty guineas between Michaelmass and Christmass, of which I will give you an account when I come to town. I remember the counsel you give me in your letter ; but dissembling, though lawful in some cases, is not my talent ; yet, for your sake, I will struggle with the plain openness of my nature, and keep-in my just resentments against that

" To make the parallel hold tack,

" Methinks there's little lacking ;

" One took his father pick-a-pack,

" And t'other sent his packing."

The disagreeable repetition of the word *old* in the third line might have been easily avoided, by substituting the word *great* ; but the writer's principles would not allow him to give William this epithet.—In fact, neither he nor Tonson was *old* at the period alluded to ; though some years afterwards (when these lines were probably written,) the latter was so called, to distinguish him from his nephew, the younger Jacob Tonson.

degenerate order. In the mean time, I flatter not my self with any manner of hopes, but do my duty, and suffer for God's sake; being assured, beforehand, never to be rewarded, though the times should alter.—Towards the latter end of this month, September, Charles will begin to recover his perfect health, according to his Nativity, which, casting it my self, I am sure is true; and all things hitherto have happened accordingly to the very time that I predicted them: I hope at the same time to recover more health, according to my age. Remember me to poor Harry, whose prayers I earnestly desire. My Virgil succeeds in the world beyond its desert or my expectation. You know, the profits might have been more; but neither my conscience nor my honour would suffer me to take them:⁹ but I never can repent of my constancy, since I am thoroughly persuaded of the justice of the cause for which I suffer. It has pleased God to raise up many friends to me amongst my enemies, though they who ought to have been my friends are negligent of me. I am called to dinner, and cannot go on with this letter, which I desire you to excuse; and am

Your most affectionate father,

JOHN DRYDEN.

⁹ This probably alludes to the proposition which appears to have been made to him, concerning the dedication of his Virgil to King William; for which a valuable pecuniary reward might have been expected.

Superscribed,

Al Illustrissimo Sig^{re}.

Carlo Dryden,

Camariere d'Honore A. S. S.

Franca per Mantoua.

In Roma.

To this Letter Lady Elizabeth Dryden subjoined, on the same paper, the following Postscript :

My dear sons, I sent your Letter emediately to your father, after I had read it, as you will find by his. I have not room to say much, having writ former Letters to you, datted the 27 of August, your father being then out of Town: he writes me word—he is much at woon as to his health, and his defnese is not wosce, but much as he was when he was heare. He expresses a great desire to see my dear Charles: and trully I see noe reason why you should not both come together, to be a comfort to woon another and to us both, if the King of France includ Ingland in the peace;¹ for you doe but Gust make shift to live wheare you are, and soe I hope you may doe heare; for I will Leaf noe Ston unturn'd to help my belov'd sonns. If I cane, I will send this Letter by the same way it came;* that is, it was brought me from woon Mr. Galowway, who corresponds with Roszie; I payd woon and Sixpence

¹ The Peace of Ryswick, which was proclaimed at London, in the following month, October 19, 1697, O. S.

* She means, I suppose,—by the same way her son's letter came to her.

for it, and do offer to pay him what he demandes, so that he would take ceare the [packet] might come safe to your handes. I long tell I heare my deare Charles is better. I have only room to tell you the names of the Merchantes your parcell went in: you are to demmand them of Mr. Robert Ball and Thommas Ball in Lindovino in Livorno. You are not to pay any charges for the Box, for the Port of London; if the have demanded any of you, send word to me what it is; for otherwayes wee shall pay twice for them; and this Mr. Walke-son telles me, with his service to you both. Farwell, my deare children: God Almighty keep you in his protection, for that is the wishes and prayers of your most affec: Mother, that sends her bles-singe to you all; not forgetting my Sonn Harry, whose prayers I desire* for a Comfortable Meetinge. I hope I may have some better thinges against you come, than what is sent you in that box; there being nothing Considurabell but my deare Jackes play, who I desire in his next to me to give me a true account how my deare Sonn Charles is head dus; for I cane be at noe rest tell I heare he is better, or rather thourely well, which I dally pray for.†

* His father had also particularly desired his son Harry's prayers. Perhaps he was at this time intended for holy orders, though he afterwards became an officer in the Pope's Guards. See vol. i. part i. p. 426.

† The education of ladies was in general so much neglected in the last age, that Lady Elizabeth Dryden's orthography, however strange, was not singular. A former letter, however, written by her to Dr. Busby, of which I

LETTER XXII.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

MR. TONSON, [f. Dec. 1697.]

I THANK you heartily for the sherry; it was as you sayd, the best of the kind I ever dranke. I have found the catalogue you desire, of the Subscribers' names, you left with me; and have sent them to you inclosed. Remember in the copy of verses for St. Cecilia, to alter the name of *Lais*, which is twice there, for *Thais*: those two ladyes were contemporaries, which caused that small mistake. I wish you could tell me how to send my sonns our Virgil, which you gave me; and should be glad if you could put me in a way of remitting thirty guineas to Rome; which I woud pay heer, for my sonns to have the vallue there, according as the exchange goes. Any time this fortnight will be soon enough to send the money: the book I know will require a longer space, because ships go not for Italy every day.

I am

Your humble Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

I hear, Tom Brown is comeing out vpon me.

have seen the original, is not disfigured by the odd spelling which we find here; but that Letter was probably corrected by our author: when this was written, he was in the country.

LETTER XXIII.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

Wednesday. [f. Dec. 1697.]

MR. TONSON,

I HAVE broken off my studies from THE CONQUEST OF CHINA, to review Virgil, and bestow'd nine entire days upon him. You may have the printed copy you sent me to-morrow morning, if you will come for it yourself; for the printer is a beast, and understands nothing I can say to him of correcting the press.—Dr. Chetwood² claims my promise of the Ode on St. Cecilia's Day; which I desire you to send to him (according to the parliament phrase) forthwith. My wife says you have broken your promise, about the picture,³ and desires it speedily: the rest I will tell you when you come.

Yours,

JOHN DRYDEN.

² See vol. iii. p. 547, n.

³ I know not to what picture our author alludes: perhaps a portrait of himself, which Tonson had promised to present to Lady Elizabeth Dryden.

LETTER XXIV.

TO MR. JACOB TONSON.

[f. Dec. 1697.]

MR. TONSON,

You were no sooner gone, but I felt in my pocket, and found my Lady Chudleigh's⁴ verses; which this afternoon I gave Mr. Walsh to read in the Coffee-house. His opinion is the same with mine, that they are better than any which are printed before the book: so thinks also Mr. Wycherly. I have them by me; but do not send them, till I heare from my Lord Clifford, whether my Lady will put her name to them or not: therefore I desire they may be printed last of all the copies,⁵ and of all the book. I have also written this day to Mr. Chetwood, and let him know,

⁴ Mary, the daughter of Richard Leigh, of Winslade, in the county of Devon, Esq. She was the wife of Sir George Chudleigh, of Ashton, in the same county, Bart, and died in the year 1710.

⁵ The copies of commendatory verses prefixed to the translation of Virgil. That work appears to have been at this time sent to the press, for the second edition, which was published in 1698: on which ground I have affixed the conjectural date above. Lady Chudleigh's verses were, however, not printed before our author's work, but appeared afterwards in a Collection of her Poems, of which the second edition was published in 8vo. in 1709.

that the book is immediately going to the press again. My opinion is, that the printer should begin with the first Pastoral, and print on to the end of the Georgiques, or farther, if occasion be, till Dr. Chetwood corrects his preface,⁶ which he writes me word is printed very false. You cannot take too great care of the printing this edition exactly after my amendments; for a fault of that nature will disoblige me eternally.

I am glad to hear from all hands, that my Ode⁷ is esteem'd the best of all my poetry, by all the town: I thought so myself when I writ it; but being old, I mistrusted my own judgment. I hope it has done you service, and will do more. You told me not, but the town says you are printing Ovid *de Arte Amandi*. I know my translation⁸ is very uncorrect; but at the same time I know, nobody else can do it better, with all their pains. If there be any loose papers left in the Virgil I gave you this morning, look for them, and send them back by my man: I miss not any yet; but 'tis possible some may be left, because I gave you the book in a hurry. I vow to God, if Everingham takes not care of this impression, he shall never print any thing of mine hereafter: for I will write on, since I find I can.

⁶ The Preface to the Pastorals, which has been erroneously attributed to Walsh.

⁷ The Ode for St. Cecilia's Day.

⁸ Our author only translated the first book.

I desire you to make sure of the three pounds of snuff, the same of which I had one pound from you. When you send it any morning, I will pay for it all together. But this is not the business of this letter.—When you were heer, I intended to have sent an answer to poor Charles his letter; but I had not then the letter which my chirurgon promis'd me, of his advice, to prevent a rupture, which he fears.⁹ Now I have the surgeon's answer, which I have inclos'd in my letter to my sonn. This is a business of the greatest consequence in the world: for you know how I love Charles; and therefore I write to you with all the earnestness of a father, that you will procure Mr. Francia' to inclose it in his packet this week: for a week lost may be my sonn's ruine; whom I intend to send for next summer, without his brother, as I have written him word: and if it please God that I must dye of over-study, I cannot spend my life better, than in saving his. I vallue not any price for a double letter: let me know it, and it shall be payd; for I dare not trust it by the post: being satisfy'd by experience, that Ferrand will do by this, as he did by two letters which I sent my sonns, about my dedicating to the King:¹ of which

⁹ His son Charles had probably been much hurt by a dangerous fall at Rome. In a former Letter, his mother inquires particularly about his *head*. See also vol. i. part i. pp. 411, 417.

¹ Probably the Genoese Resident at that time.

² See p. 57. n. 9.

they received neither. If you cannot go your self, then send a note to Signior Francia, as earnestly as you can write it, to beg that it may go this day, I meane Friday. I need not tell you, how much herein you will oblige

Your Friend and Servant,

J. D.

LETTER XXV.

TO MRS. STEWARD.³

MADAM,

Saturday, Octob. 1st—98.

You have done me the honour to invite so often, that it would look like want of respect to

³ This lady, who was not less distinguished for her talents and accomplishments than her beauty and virtues, having been both a painter and a poetess, was the eldest surviving daughter of John Creed, of Oundle, Esq., (Secretary to Charles II. for the affairs of Tangier,) by Elizabeth Pickering, his wife, who was the only daughter of Sir Gilbert Pickering, Baronet, our author's cousin-german; of whom, and of his amiable daughter, Mrs. Creed, a full account has already been given. See vol. i. part i. pp. 28—43, 340—342. Her eldest son, Richard Creed, as we have seen, fell in the battle of Blenheim, and was honoured with a monument in Westminster-Abbey. Her eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was born in the year 1672, and in 1692 married Elmes Steward, of Cotterstock, in the county of Northampton, Esq.; where they principally resided. By this gentleman, who is said to have preferred field-sports to any productions of the

refuse it any longer. How can you be so good to an old decrepid man, who can entertain you with no discours which is worthy of your good sense, and who can onely be a trouble to you in all the time he stays at Cotterstock. Yet I will obey your commands as far as possibly I can, and give you the inconvenience you are pleas'd to desire: at least for the few days which I can spare from other necessary business, which requires me at Tichmarsh.⁴ Therefore, if you please to send your coach on Tuesday next by eleven a clock in the morning, I hope to wait on you before dinner. There is onely one more trouble, which I am almost asham'd to name. I am obliged to visit my Cousin Dryden of Chesterton,⁵ some time next week, who is nine miles from hence, and

Muses, she had three children; Elizabeth, who became the wife of Thomas Gwillim, Esq., of Old Court, in the parish of Whitchurch, near Ross in Herefordshire; Anne, who died unmarried; and Jemima, who married Elmes Spinckes, of Aldwinckle, Esq. Mrs. Steward, who survived her husband above thirty years, in the latter part of her life became blind, in which melancholy state she died at the house of her son-in-law, Mr. Gwillim, at the age of seventy-one, Jan. 17, 1742-3; and a monument was erected to her memory in the church of Whitchurch.—The Hall of Cotterstock House was painted in fresco by her, in a very masterly style, and she drew several portraits of her friends in Northamptonshire. Her own portrait, painted by herself, is in the possession of her kinswoman, Mrs. Ord, of Queen Anne Street.

⁴ Where our author probably was at this time.

⁵ See vol. i. part i. p. 321, n. 6; and p. 323—326.

only five from you. If it be with your convenience to spare me your coach thether for a day, the rest of my time till Monday is at your service; and I am sorry for my own sake it cannot be any longer, this year, because I have some visits after my return hether, which I cannot avoyd. But if it please God to give me life and health, I may give you occasion another time to repent of your kindness, by makeing you weary of my company. My sonn kisses your hand. Be pleas'd to give his humble service to my Cousin Steward, and mine, who am,

Madam,

Your most obedient, oblig'd Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

For my Honour'd Cousine,⁶

Mrs. Steward, att Cotterstock,

These.

LETTER XXVI.

TO ELMES STEWARD, ESQ.

[*Probably, Nov. 20, 1698.*]⁷

MY HONOUR'D COUSIN,

I SHOU'D have receiv'd your letter with too much satisfaction, if it had not been allay'd with

⁶ Our author, in addressing his female relations, generally writes *Cousine*, following the French mode.

⁷ It should seem from the subsequent letter that Dryden, after having spent a few days with his friends at Cotterstock, and dispatched his business at Tichmarsh, returned

the bad news of my cousin your wife's indisposition; which yet I hope will not continue. I am sure, if care and love will contribute to her health, she will want neither from so tender a husband as you are: and indeed you are both worthy of each other. You have been pleas'd, each of you, to be kind to my sonn⁸ and me, your poor relations, without any merit on our side, unless you will let our gratitude pass for our desert. And now you are pleas'd to invite another trouble on your self, which our bad company may possibly draw upon you next year, if I have life and health to come into Northamptonshyre; and that you will please not to make so much a stranger of me another time.—I intend my wife shall tast the plover you did me the favour to send me. If either your lady or you shall at any time honour me with a letter, my house is in Gerard-street, the fifth door on the left hand, comeing from Newport-street. I pray God I may hear better news of both your healths, and of my good cousin Creed's,⁹ and my cousin Dorothy,¹ than I have had while I was in

to Cotterstock, and passed four or five weeks there: and this letter seems to have been written after his return to Tichmarsh, just as he was setting out for London, and in consequence of a present of some wild fowl.

⁸ His eldest son, Charles, who returned from Italy to England about the middle of the year 1698.

⁹ Mrs. Steward's father, Mr. John Creed, who appears from the next Letter to have been indisposed at this time. He died in 1701, and was buried at Tichmarsh.

¹ Miss, or in the language of that day, *Mistress*, Dorothy Creed, second daughter of John Creed, Esq., and sister

this country. I shall languish till you send me word; and I assure you I write this without poetry, who am, from the bottome of my heart,

My honour'd Cousin's most obliged,

Humble Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

My sonn and I kiss my Cousin Steward's hand, and give our service to your sister and pretty Miss Betty.

For my Honour'd Cousin,

Elmes Steward, Esq., Att Cotterstock.

LETTER XXVII.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

MADAM,

Nov. 23d, 1698.

To take acknowledgments of favours for favours done you, is onely yours. I am always on the receiving hand; and you who have been pleas'd to be troubled so long with my bad company, in stead of forgiveing, which is all I could expect, will turn it to a kindness on my side. If your house be often so molested, you will have reason to be weary of it, before the ending of the year: and wish Cotterstock were planted in a desart, an hundred miles off from any poet.—After I had lost the

to Mrs. Steward. *Miss*, however, which about twenty years before was only applied to women of the town, was at this time used in speaking of very young girls. So below,—“pretty Miss Betty,” (afterwards Mrs. Gwillim); who was then under six years old.

happiness of your company, I could expect no other than the loss of my health, which follow'd, according to the proverb, that misfortunes seldom come alone. I had no woman to visite * but the parson's wife ; and she, who was intended by nature as a help meet for a deaf husband, was somewhat of the loudest for my conversation ; and for other things, I will say no more then that she is just your contrary, and an epitome of her own country. My journey to London was yet more unpleasant than my abode at Tichmarsh ; for the coach was crowded up with an old woman, fatter than any of my hostesses on the rode. - Her weight made the horses travel very heavily ; but, to give them a breathing time, she would often stop us, and plead some necessity of nature,² and tell us—we were all flesh and blood : but she did this so frequently, that at last we conspir'd against her ; and that she might not be inconvenienc'd by staying in the coach, turn'd her out in a very dirty place, where she was to wade up to the ankles, before she cou'd reach the next hedge. When I was ridd of her, I came sick home, and kept my house for three weeks together ; but,

* At Tichmarsh, after his return from Cotterstock.

² The reader who may here be disposed to charge our author with indelicacy, should consider, that the manners of the last age were much grosser, or, shall I say—*simpler*, than they are at present ; and that even in the highest circles, and in the company of the most elegant women, many things were said, without giving offence to the most fastidious, which would now be thought

by advice of my Doctour, takeing twice the bitter draught, with sena in it, and looseing at least twelve ounces of blood, by cupping on my neck, I am just well enough to go abroad in the afternoon; but am much afflicted that I have you a companion of my sickness: though I 'scap'd with one cold fit of an ague, and yours, I feare, is an intermitting feavour. Since I heard nothing of your father, whom I left ill, I hope he is recover'd of his reall sickness, and that your sister is well of hers, which was onely in imagination. My wife and sonn return you their most humble service, and I give mine to my cousin Steward.—Madam,

Your most obliged and
most obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

[The superscription has not been preserved.]

LETTER XXVIII.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

MADAM,

Dec. 12th. —98.

ALL my letters being nothing but acknowledgments of your favours to me, 'tis no wonder if they

indelicate and improper. When Shakspeare wrote the scene between Hamlet and Ophelia, in which he has been accused of coarseness and indelicacy, there are very good grounds for believing that he only made the Prince of Denmark talk to the daughter of Polonius in the same style in which his patron, Lord Southampton, addressed the fair Mrs. Vernon, whom he married.

are all alike : for they can but express the same thing, I being eternally the receiver, and you the giver. I wish it were in my power to turn the skale on the other hand, that I might see how you, who have so excellent a wit, cou'd thank on your side. Not to name my self or my wife, my sonn Charles is the great commender of your last receiv'd present : who being of late somewhat indispos'd, uses to send for some of the same sort, which we call heer marrow-puddings, for his suppers ; but the tast of yours has so spoyl'd his markets heer, that there is not the least comparison betwixt them. You are not of an age to be a Sybill, and yet I think you are a Prophetess ; for the direction on your basket was for him ; and he is likely to enjoy the greatest part of them : for I always think the young are more worthy than the old ; especially since you are one of the former sort, and that he mends upon your medicine.— I am very glad to hear my cousin, your father, is comeing or come to town ; perhaps this ayr may be as beneficiall to him as it has been to me : but you tell me nothing of your own health, and I fear Cotterstock³ is too agueish for this season.— My wife and sonn give you their most humble thanks and service ; as I do mine to my cousin Steward ; and am, Madam,

Your most oblig'd obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

³ Cotterstock is situated near the river Nyne, and, I believe, in a low wet country.

*For Mrs. Steward,
Att Cotterstock, near Oundle,
in the county of Northton, These.
To be left with the Postmaster of Oundle.*

LETTER XXIX.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

Candlemas-Day, 1698 [-9.]

MADAM,

OLD men are not so insensible of beauty, as it may be, you young ladies think. For my own part, I must needs acknowledge that your fair eyes* had made me your slave before I receiv'd your fine presents. Your letter puts me out of doubt that they have lost nothing of their lustre, because it was written with your own hand; and not heareing of a feavour or an ague, I will please my self with the thoughts that they have wholly left you. I wou'd also flatter my self with the hopes of waiting on you at Cotterstock some time next summer; but my want of health may perhaps hinder me. But if I am well enough to travell as farr northward as Northamptonshyre, you are sure of a guest, who has been too well us'd, not to trouble you again.

* Mrs. Steward was at this time but twenty-seven, and very handsome. Soon after the Revolution, she was esteemed one of the finest women that appeared at Queen Mary's Court.

My sonn, of whom you have done me the favour to enquire, mends of his indisposition very slowly; the ayr of England not agreeing with him hetherto so well as that of Italy. The Bath is propos'd by the Doctours, both to him and me: but we have not yet resolv'd absolutely on that journey; for that city is so closs and so ill situated, that perhaps the ayr may do us more harm than the waters can do us good: for which reason we intend to try them heer first; and if we find not the good effect which is promis'd of them, we will save our selves the pains of goeing thether. In the mean time, betwixt my intervalls of physique and other remedies which I am using for my gravell, I am still drudgeing on: always a poet, and never a good one.⁴ I pass my time sometimes with Ovid, and sometimes with our old English poet, Chaucer; translateing such stories as best please my fancy; and intend besides them to add somewhat of my own: so that it is not impossible, but ere the summer be pass'd, I may come

⁴ Here, it is observable, our author speaks of himself with that modesty, which was natural to him, and truly part of his character. It was only among the Criticks in Coffee-houses, or in his letters to his bookseller, or when he was decried and run down by his adversaries, that he considered it necessary to keep up a proper port, and not to abate a jot of his poetical pretensions. In those cases, he seems to have thought it fair to follow the example, and adopt the language, of Horace,—*Sume superbiam quæsitam meritis*. See vol. i. part i. p. 477.

down to you with a volume in my hand,^s like a dog out of the water, with a duck in his mouth.—As for the rarities you promise, if beggars might be choosers, a part of a chine of honest bacon wou'd please my appetite more than all the marrow puddings; for I like them better plain; having a very vulgar stomach.—My wife and your Cousin, Charles, give you their most humble service, and thanks for your remembrance of them. I present my own to my worthy Cousin, your husband, and am, with all respect,

Madam,

Your most obliged Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

For

Mrs. Stewart, att Cotterstock

near Oundle, in Northamptonshyre,

These.

To be left with the Postmaster of Oundle.

^s In Bridges's HISTORY OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, vol. ii. p. 438, the following passage is found. The author is speaking of Cotterstock :

" Mr. Steward hath here a good estate, and a seat built by Mr. Norton. *At this house Mr. Dryden wrote his FABLES, and spent the two last summers of his life.*"

We here see, how lightly traditional stories run round the world. On examination, I believe, they will very generally be found, like this account, to be compounded of truth and falsehood. In the autumn of the year 1698, Dryden made an excursion from Tichmarsh to Cotterstock, and appears to have passed a few weeks there;

LETTER XXX.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

Thursday, Feb. 9th.—98 [-9].

MADAM,

FOR this time I must follow a bad example, and send you a shorter letter than your short one: you were hinder'd by dancers, and I am forc'd to dance attendance all this afternoon after a troublesome business, so soon as I have written this, and seal'd it. Onely I can assure you that your father and mother and all your relations are in health, or were yesterday, when I sent to enquire of their welfare.—On Tuesday night we had a violent wind, which blew down three of my chimneys, and dismantled all one side of my house, by throwing down the tiles. My neighbours, and indeed all the town, suffer'd more or less; and some were kill'd. The great trees in St. James's Park are many of them torn up from the roots; as they were before Oliver Cromwell's death,⁶ and the

and in 1699 he spent full six weeks at the same house. Perhaps in that time he wrote two or three hundred verses of the volume afterwards published with the title of FABLES; but that probably was the utmost; for he himself has told us, that in his visits to the country his object was, *to unweary himself, not to drudge.*

⁶ In a small MS. Common-place book written by Archbishop Sancroft, (in the Bodleian Library, 64. Z. p. 125,) is the following entry:

late Queen's: but your father had no damage.—I sent my man for the present you design'd me; but he return'd empty-handed; for there was no such

" Sep. 3, 1658. The blustering tyrant, OLIVER, in a whirlwind left the world; dying, as he had lived, in a storm:—buried at a greater charge than the greatest English Kings in the peaceablest times."

Sancroft knew him well, and has painted him in his true colours, in an admirable covert satire, published anonymously in 1652, under the title of MODERN POETIES, taken from Machiavel, Borgia, and other choise Authors, by an eye-witnesse.

The storm that preceded Cromwell's death is mentioned by several historians, and has been recorded in verse by Waller: but it is not equally well known that the death of another *blusterer* was attended with the same circumstance.

" On the other side (says Dr. Tanner, afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph,) is a coeval note of an old MS. belonging to our cathedral, [Norwich] at the odd exit of the great Cardinal Wolsey, not mentioned, I think, in Cavendish, or any of the Historians; much like OLIVER's wind.

" Ad finem Annalium Bartholomœi Cotton, MS. in Bibl. Eccl. Cath. Norvic. habetur hæc notitia.

" Anno Xti 1530, nocte immediate sequente quartum diem Novembris, vehemens ventus quasi per totam Angliam accidebat; et die proximé sequente, quinto sc. die ejusdem mensis, circa horam primam post meridiem, captus erat Dñs Thomas Wolsye, Cardinalis, in ædibus suis de Cahowe [l. Cawood] infra diocesis suam Eboracensem; et postea in itinere suo versus Londiniam vigiliâ S^{ti} Andreæ prox. sequente apud Leycestriam moriebatur: quo die ventus quasi Gehennalis tunc fere per totam Angliam re-accidebat; cujus vehementiâ apud Leystoff

man as *Carter*, a carrier, innning at the Bear and Ragged Staff in Smithfield, nor any one there ever heard of such a person; by which I gness that some body has deceiv'd you with a counterfeited name. Yet my obligations are the same; and the favour shall be always own'd by,

Madam,

Your most humble Servant,

and Kinsman,

JOHN DRYDEN.

*For Mrs. Stewart,*⁷

Att Cotterstock neare Oundle, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

March the 4th. 1698 [-9].

MADAM,

I HAVE reason to be pleas'd with writeing to you, because you are daily giveing me occasions to be

infra dioc. Norwicensem, et alibi in diversis locis infra regnum Angliæ, multæ naves perierunt." Letter from Archdeacon Tanner to Dr. Arthur Charlett, August 11, 1709. Mss. Ballard. in Bibl. Bodl. iv. 52.

⁷ Our author sometimes spells his kinswoman's name Steward, and at others Stewart. I have followed the former mode, her husband's name being so written in the London Gazette, when he was appointed Sheriff of the county of Northampton; and Mrs. Steward, I have been informed, always adhered to that orthography.

pleas'd. The present which you made me this week, I have receiv'd; and it will be part of the treat I am to make to three of my friends about Tuesday next: my cousin Driden,⁸ of Chesterton, having been also pleas'd to add to it a turkey hen with eggs, and a good young goose; besides a very kind letter, and the news of his own good health, which I value more than all the rest; he being so noble a benefactor to a poor and so undeserveing a kinsman, and one of another persuasion in matters of religion. Your enquiry of his welfare, and sending also mine, have at once oblig'd both him and me. I hope my good cousin Stewart will often visite him, especially before hunting goes out,⁹ to be a comfort to him in his sorrow for the loss of his deare brother,¹ who was a most extraordinary well-natur'd man, and much my friend. Exercise, I know, is my cousin Driden's life, and the oftner he goes out will be the better for his health.—We poor Catholics daily expect a most severe Proclamation to come out against us;² and at the same time are

⁸ John Driden, Esq. his cousin-german.

⁹ See our author's Epistle to this gentleman:

"With crowds attended of your ancient race,

"You seek the champagne sports or sylvan chace," &c.

¹ Probably Bevil Driden, who died about this time.

² This severe Proclamation appeared in the London Gazette, No. 3476, Monday, March 6, 1698-9. It enjoined all Popish Recusants to remove to their respective places of abode; or if they had none, to the dwellings of

satisfied that the King is very unwilling to persecute us, considering us to be but an handfull, and those disarm'd; but the Archbishop of Canterbury is our heavy enemy, and heavy indeed he is in all respects.³

This day was play'd a reviv'd comedy of Mr. Congreve's, call'd *THE DOUBLE DEALER*, which was never very takeing. In the play-bill was printed—"Written by Mr. Congreve; with severall expressions omitted." What kind of expressions those were, you may easily gness, if you have seen the Monday's Gazette, wherein is the King's order for the reformation of the stage:⁴ but the printing

their fathers or mothers; and not to remove five miles from thence: and it charged the Lord-Mayor of London, and all other Justices of Peace, to put the statute 1 William and Mary, c. 9. for amoving papists ten miles from London and Westminster, into execution, by tendering them the declaration therein mentioned; and also another Act of William and Mary, for disarming papists.

³ Dr. Thomas Tennison, who succeeded to the See of Canterbury in 1694, on the death of Tillotson. He is thus sarcastically described by William Shippen, in *FAC-TION DISPLAYED*, a poem written a few years afterwards:

"A pause ensued, till PATRIARCHO's grace
 "Was pleas'd to rear his huge unwieldy mass;
 "A mass unanimated with a soul,
 "Or else he'd ne'er be made so vile a tool:
 "He'd ne'er his apostolick charge profane,
 "And atheists' and fanaticks' cause maintain.
 "At length, as from the hollow of an oak,
 "The bulky Primate yawn'd, and silence broke:
 "I much approve," &c.

an authour's name in a play-bill is a new manner of proceeding, at least in England.—When any

So also Edmund Smith, in his elegant Ode,—CHARLETTUS PERCIVALLO SUO :

“ Scribe securus, quid agit Senatus,

“ *Quid caput stertit grave Lambethanum,*

“ Quid comes Guilford, quid habent novorum

“ Dawksque Dyerque.”

Yet Tennison's Review of Bacon's writings, which was published about twenty years before the date of this letter, is a judicious and useful tract, and ought to be prefixed to every edition of his works, instead of Mallet's florid and empty Life of that great philosopher.

* The London Gazette, No. 3474, Monday, Feb. 27, 1698-9, contains the Order alluded to :

“ His Majesty has been pleased to command that the following Order should be sent to both Playhouses :

“ His Majesty being informed that, notwithstanding an Order made the 4th of June, 1697, by the Earl of Sunderland, then Lord Chamberlain of his Majesties Household, to prevent the profaneness and immorality of the Stage, several plays have lately been acted, containing expressions contrary to religion and good manners : And whereas the Master of the Revels has represented, that, in contempt of the said Order, the Actors do often neglect to leave out such profane and indecent expressions as he has thought proper to be omitted : These are therefore to signify his Majesties pleasure, that you do not hereafter presume to act any thing in any play, contrary to religion and good manners, as you shall answer it at your utmost peril.—Given under my hand this 18th of February, 1698, in the eleventh year of his Majesties reign.

“ PERE. BERTIE.

“ An Order has been likewise sent by his Majesties

papers of verses in manuscript, which are worth your reading, come abroad, you shall be sure of them ; because, being a poetess yourself,* you like those entertainments. I am still drudging at a book of Miscellanyes,⁵ which I hope will be well enough ; if otherwise, threescore and seven⁶ may

command, to the Master of the Revels, not to licence any plays containing expressions contrary to religion and good manners ; and to give notice to the Lord Chamberlain of his Majesties Houshold, or in his absence, to the Vice-Chamberlain, if the players presume to act any thing which he has struck out."

* To this accomplished lady may be applied the following spirited lines in our author's Ode on Mrs. Anne Killigrew, who, like her, cultivated the sister-arts of Poesy and Painting :

" Born to the spacious empire of the Nine,
 " One would have thought, she should have been content
 " To manage well that mighty government ;
 " But what can young ambitious souls confine ?
 " To the next realm she stretch'd her sway,
 " For PAINTURE near adjoining lay,
 " A plenteous province and alluring prey.

* * * * *

" Thus nothing to her genius was deny'd ;
 " But, like a ball of fire the further thrown,
 " Still with a greater blaze she shone,
 " And her bright soul broke out on every side."

Poetry seldom affords an image more happily illustrative than this. Our author evidently had a sky-rocket in his thoughts ; which he has dignified, by avoiding the common and familiar term.

⁵ His FABLES.

⁶ Our author here refers to his last birth-day in 1698,

be pardon'd. Charles is not yet so well recover'd as I wish him; but I may say, without vanity, that his virtue and sobriety have made him much belov'd in all companies. Both he and his mother give you their most humble acknowledgments of your rememb'ring them. Be pleas'd to give mine to my Cousin Stewart, who am both his and your

Most obliged obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

You may see I was in hast, by writeing on the wrong side of the paper.

For Mrs. Steward, etc. ut supra.

LETTER XXXII.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

Tuesday, July the 11th, [1699.]

MADAM,

As I cannot accuse my self to have receiv'd any letters from you without answer, so on the other side I am oblig'd to believe it, because you say it. 'Tis true, I have had so many fitts of sickness, and so much other unpleasant business, that I may possibly have receiv'd those favours, and deferr'd my acknowledgment till I forgot to thank you for them. However it be, I cannot but confess that never was any unanswering man so civilly reproach'd

when he was sixty-seven, complete. He was at this time in his sixty-eighth year.

by a fair lady.—I presum'd to send you word by your sisters⁷ of the trouble I intended you this summer, and added a petition, that you would please to order some small beer to be brew'd for me without hops, or with a very inconsiderable quantity; because I lost my health last year by drinking bitter beer at Tichmarsh. It may perhaps be sour, but I like it not the worse, if it be small enough. What els I have to request, is onely the favour of your coach, to meet me at Oundle, and to convey me to you: of which I shall not fail to give you timely notice. My humble service attends my Cousin Stewart and your relations at Oundle. My wife and sonn desire the same favour; and I am particularly,

Madam,

Your most obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

For Mrs. Stewart, etc.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO SAMUEL PEPYS, ESQ.⁸

PADRON MIO,

July the 14th, 1699.

I REMEMBER, last year, when I had the honour of dineing with you, you were pleas'd to recommend

⁷ Dorothy and Jemima Creed; the latter of whom died, Feb. 23, 1705-6, and was buried at Tichmarsh.

⁸ The original of this Letter is in the Pepysian Library, bequeathed, together with his prints and manuscripts, to Magdalen College, in Cambridge, by the gentleman

to me the character of Chaucer's GOOD PARSON. Any desire of yours is a command to me; and accordingly I have put it into my English, with such additions and alterations as I thought fit. Having translated as many Fables from Ovid, and as many Novills from Boccace and Tales from Chaucer, as will make an indifferent large volume in folio, I intend them for the press in Michaelmass term next. In the mean time my PARSON desires the favour of being known to you, and promises, if you find any fault in his character, he will reform it. Whenever you please, he shall wait on you, and for the

to whom it is addressed; who was Secretary to the Admiralty in the reign of Charles II. and James II. "He first," says Granger, (BIOGR. HIST. iv. 322) reduced the affairs of the Admiralty to order and method; and that method was so just, as to have been a standing model to his successors in that important office. His MEMOIRS relating to the Navy is a well written piece; and his copious collection of manuscripts, now remaining with the rest of his library at Magdalen College in Cambridge, is an invaluable treasure of naval knowledge. He was far from being a mere man of business: his conversation and address had been greatly refined by travel. He thoroughly understood and practised musick; was a judge of painting, sculpture, and architecture; and had more than a superficial knowledge in history and philosophy. His fame among the Virtuosi was such, that he was thought to be a very proper person to be placed at the head of the Royal Society, of which he was some time [1685, 1686,] President. His Prints have been already mentioned. His Collection of English Ballads, in five large folio volumes, begun by Mr. Selden, and carried down to 1700, is one of his singular curiosities.—*Ob.* 26 May, 1703."

safer conveyance, I will carry him in my pocket ;
who am

My *Padrons* most obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.⁹

For Samuel Pepys, Esq.

Att his house in York-street, These.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

MADAM,

Saturday, Aug. 5th, 1699.

THIS is only a word, to threaten you with a troublesome guest, next week : I have taken places for my self and my sonn, in the Oundle coach, which sets out on Thursday next the tenth of this

⁹ To this Letter Mr. Pepys wrote the following Answer :

" SIR,

Friday, July 14, 1699.

" You truly have obliged mee ; and possibly in saying so, I am more in earnest then you can readily think ; as verily hoping from this your copy of one GOOD PARSON, to fancy some amends made mee for the hourly offence I beare with from the sight of soe many lewd originalls.

" I shall with great pleasure attend you on this occasion, when ere you'l permit it ; unless you would have the kindness to double it to mee, by suffering my coach to wayte on you (and who you can gayne mee y^e same favour from) hither, to a cold chicken and a sallade, any *noone* after Sunday, as being just stepping into the ayre for 2 days.

" I am most respectfully

" Your honord and obed^{nt} Servant,

S. P.

present August; and hope to wait on a fair lady at Cotterstock on Friday the eleventh. If you please to let your coach come to Oundle, I shall save my cousin Creed the trouble of hers. All heer are your most humble servants, and particularly an old Cripple, who calls him self

Your most obliged Kinsman
and Admirer,

JOHN DRYDEN.

For Mrs. Stewart, Att

Cotterstock near Oundle,

in Northamptonsh. These.

To be left with the Postmaster of Oundle.

LETTER XXXV.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

MADAM,

Sept. 28th, 1699.

YOUR goodness to me will make you solicitous of my welfare since I left Cotterstock. My journey has in general been as happy as it cou'd be, without the satisfaction and honour of your company. 'Tis true the Master of the stage-coach has not been over civill to me: for he turn'd us out of the road at the first step, and made us go to Pilton; there we took in a fair young lady of eighteen, and her brother, a young gentleman; they are related to the Treshams, but not of that name: thence we drove to Higham, where we had an old serving-woman, and a young fine mayd:

we din'd at Bletso, and lay at Silso, six miles beyond Bedford. There we put out the old woman, and took in Councillour Jennings his daughter; her father goeing along in the Kittering coach or rideing by it, with other company. We all din'd at Hatfield together, and came to town safe at seaven in the evening. We had a young Doctour, who rode by our coach, and seem'd to have a smickering¹ to our young lady of Pilton, and ever rode before to get dinner in a readiness. My sonn, Charles, knew him formerly a Jacobite; and now going over to Antigoo, with Colonel Codrington,² haveing been formerly in the West Indies.—Which of our two young ladies was the handsomer, I know not. My sonn lik'd the Councillour's daughter best: I thought they were both equall. But not goeing to Tichmarsh Grove, and afterwards by Catworth, I miss'd my two couple of rabbets, which my Cousin, your father, had given me to carry with me, and cou'd not see my sister by the way: I was likewise disappointed of Mr. Cole's Ribadavia wine:³ but I am almost resolv'd to sue the Stage Coach, for putting me six

¹ To *smicker*, though omitted by Dr. Johnson, is found in Kersey's Dictionary, 1708; where it is interpreted—"To look amorously or wantonly."

² Christopher Codrington, the noble benefactor of All-Souls College, who was appointed Governor of the Chribbee Islands, not long before; May 20, 1699.

³ In the neighbourhood of the town of Ribadavia, in Spain, the best Spanish wine is supposed to be produced.

or seaven miles out of the way, which he cannot justify.

Be pleas'd to accept my acknowledgment of all your favours, and my Cousin Stuart's; and by employing my sonn and me in any thing you desire to have done, give us occasion to take our revenge* on our kind relations both at Oundle and Cotterstock. Be pleas'd, your father, your mother, your two fair sisters, and your brother,† may find my sonn's service and mine made acceptable to them by your delivery; and believe me to be with all manner of gratitude, give me leave to add, all manner of adoration,

Madam,

Your most obliged obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

For Mrs. Stuart, Att

Cotterstock near Oundle,

In Norththonsire,

These.

*To be left with the Postmaster
of Oundle.*

* Our author has, I think, elsewhere used this expression. It is a mere Gallicism, but perhaps may be excused; for I know not that our language affords any precise equivalent to it.

† Colonel John Creed, whose gallantry at the battle of Blenheim has been already mentioned. See vol. i. part i. p. 340, n. He died at Oundle, Nov. 21, 1751, aged 73, and was buried in the church of Tichmarsh.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES MONTAGUE.⁵

SIR,

[Octob. 1699.]

THESE verses⁶ had waited on you with the former, but that they wanted that correction which I have given them, that they may the better endure the sight of so great a judge and poet. I am now in feare that I have purg'd them out of their spirit; as our Master Busby us'd to whip a boy so long, till he made him a confirm'd block-head. My Cousin Driden saw them in the country; and the greatest exception he made to them

⁵ The superscription of this letter is wanting; but that it was addressed to Mr. Montague, is ascertained by the words—"From Mr. Dryden," being indorsed on it, in that gentleman's handwriting. Charles Montague, (afterwards Earl of Halifax,) was at this time First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer; the latter of which offices he had held from the year 1694.—The date is supplied by the subsequent letter.

Pope, in his character of Montague, in the Epistle to Arbuthnot, has asserted, that our author alone, of all the poetical tribe, "escaped his judging eye:" but we here find that he was mistaken.

⁶ The Verses addressed to his kinsman, John Driden, of Chesterton, Esq.—The former poem which had been submitted to Mr. Montague, was that addressed to Mary, Duchess of Ormond. It may be found at the end of vol. iii. They were both inserted in the volume of FABLES, which was then printing. See the next letter.

was, a satire against the Dutch valour in the last war. He desir'd me to omit it, (to use his own words) *out of the respect he had to his Sovereign.* I obey'd his commands, and left onely the praises, which I think are due to the gallantry of my own countrymen. In the description which I have made of a Parliament-man,⁷ I think I have not only drawn the features of my worthy kinsman, but have also given my own opinion of what an Englishman in Parliament ought to be; and deliver it as a memorial of my own principles to all posterity. I have consulted the judgment of my unbyass'd friends, who have some of them the honour to be known to you; and they think there is nothing which can justly give offence in that part of the poem. I say not this, to cast a blind on your judgment, (which I cou'd not do, if I endeavour'd it,) but to assure you, that nothing relateing to the publique shall stand without your permission; for it were to want common sence to desire your patronage, and resolve to disoblige you: And as I will not hazard my hopes of your protection, by refusing to obey you in any thing which I can perform with my conscience or my honour, so I am very confident you will never impose any other terms on me.—My thoughts at present are fix'd on Homer: and by my trans-

⁷ Beginning thus:

“A patriot both the King and Country serves,

“Prerogative and privilege preserves,” &c.

lation of the first Iliad, I find him a poet more according to my genius than Virgil, and consequently hope I may do him more justice, in his fiery way of writeing; which, as it is liable to more faults, so it is capable of more beauties than the exactness and sobriety of Virgil.* Since 'tis for my country's honour as well as for my own, that I am willing to undertake this task, I despair not of being encourag'd in it by your favour, who am,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

MADAM,

Nov. 7th, [1699.]

EVEN your expostulations are pleasing to me; for though they shew you angry, yet they are not without many expressions of your kindness; and therefore I am proud to be so chidden. Yet I cannot so farr abandon my own defence, as to confess any idleness or forgetfulness on my part. What has hind'ed me from writeing to you, was neither ill health, nor a worse thing, ingratitude; but a flood of little businesses, which yet are

* We find nearly the same sentiment in the Preface to the FABLES.

necessary to my subsistence, and of which I hop'd to have given you a good account before this time : but the Court rather speaks kindly of me, than does any thing for me, though they promise largely ; and perhaps they think I will advance as they go backward, in which they will be much deceiv'd : for I can never go an inch beyond my conscience and my honour. If they will consider me as a man who has done my best to improve the language, and especially the poetry, and will be content with my acquiescence under the present Government, and forbearing satire on it, that I can promise, because I can perform it : but I can neither take the oaths, nor forsake my religion : because I know not what church to go to, if I leave the Catholique ; they are all so divided amongst them selves in matters of faith, necessary to salvation, and, yet all assumeing the name of Protestants. May God be pleas'd to open your eyes, as he has open'd mine ! Truth is but one ; and they who have once heard of it, can plead no excuse, if they do not embrace it. But these are things too serious for a trifling letter.

If you desire to hear any thing more of my affairs, the Earl of Dorsett and your Cousin Montague have both seen the two poems, to the Duchess of Ormond, and my worthy Cousin Driden ; and are of opinion that I never writt better. My other friends are divided in their judgments, which to preferr ; but the greater part are for those to my dear kinsman ; which I have

corrected with so much care, that they will now be worthy of his sight, and do neither of us any dishonour after our death.

There is this day to be acted a new tragedy, made by Mr. Hopkins,⁹ and, as I believe, in rhyme. He has formerly written a play in verse, call'd *BOADICEA*, which you fair ladies lik'd; and is a poet who writes good verses without knowing how or why; I mean, he writes naturally well, without art, or learning, or good sence. Congreve is ill of the gout at Barnet Wells. I have had the honour of a visite from the Earl of Dorsett, and din'd with him.—Matters in Scotland are in a high ferment,¹

⁹ *FRIENDSHIP IMPROVED*, a tragedy, written by Charles Hopkins, the son of Dr. Ezekiel Hopkins, Bishop of Derry in Ireland. He was bred for some years in the College of Dublin, from which he was removed to Queen's College, in Cambridge, where he took the degree of B. A. in 1688. His first tragedy, *PYRRHUS, KING OF EPIRUS*, was exhibited in 1695; *BOADICEA*, in 1697. He died in 1700, in the 36th year of his age.

¹ A Scottish Company of Adventurers, in 1698, had attempted to make a settlement for the purposes of commerce, on the coast of Darien, in America. In consequence of representations from the Spaniards, who were jealous of the new settlers, and of this project being disagreeable to the Dutch and English merchants, King William had sent orders to the Governours of the Colonies to issue proclamations forbidding his subjects in America to give any assistance to the Adventurers. The Company, after their miscarriage, sought relief by an address to the King; which not meeting with a favourable

and next door to a breach betwixt the two nations; but they say from Court, that France and we are hand and glove. 'Tis thought, the King will endeavour to keep up a standing army, and make the stirr in Scotland his pretence for it: my Cousin Driden,² and the Country Party, I suppose, will be against it; for when a spirit is rais'd, 'tis hard conjuring him down again.—You see I am dull by my writeing news; but it may be, my Cousin Creed³ may be glad to hear what I believe is true, though not very pleasing. I hope he recovers health in the country, by his staying so long in it. My service to my Cousin Stuart and all at Oundle. I am, faire Cousine,

Your most obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

For Mrs. Stuart, Att

Cotterstock near Oundle,

In Northamptonshyre,

These.

*To be left at the Posthouse
in Oundle.*

answer, the whole Scottish nation was thrown into a high ferment, and about the end of the year 1699 seemed ripe for a general revolt.

² Mr. John Driden, of Chesterton, at this time represented the County of Huntingdon in parliament.

³ Mrs. Steward's father, Mr. John Creed, of Oundle.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO MRS. ELIZABETH THOMAS, JUN.⁴

MADAM,

Nov. 12, 1699.

The letter you were pleas'd to direct for me, to be left at the Coffee-house last summer, was a great honour; and your verses⁵ were, I thought, too good to be a woman's: some of my friends, to whom I read them, were of the same opinion. 'Tis not over-gallant, I must confess, to say this of the fair sex; but most certain it is, that they

⁴ Of this lady a full account has already been given. See vol. i. part i. p. 348—355. This and the two following Letters were printed by Curll in the second volume of Pope's LITERARY CORRESPONDENCE, 8vo. 1735, from copies furnished by her. He has not there affixed any date either to this or the next Letter; but prefixed to the Life of Mrs. Thomas, under the title of CORINNA, ("Memoirs of Pylades and Corinna, 8vo. 1731,) is a short extract from that before us, dated Nov. 12, 1699. With her usual disregard of truth, it is there represented to have been addressed to her in Great Russel-street, Bloomsbury; though the Letter itself shews that the writer knew no more of her place of residence, than that she lived somewhere near St. Giles's; and Curll has ascertained her residence not to have been then in Russel-street.

⁵ "A Pastoral Elegy to the memory of the Hon. Cecilia Bew," published afterwards in the Poems of Mrs. Thomas, 8vo. 1727.

generally write with more softness than strength. On the contrary, you want neither vigour in your thoughts, nor force in your expressions, nor harmony in your numbers; and methinks I find much of Orinda⁶ in your manner; to whom I had the honour to be related, and also to be known. But I continued not a day in the ignorance of the person to whom I was oblig'd; for, if you remember, you brought the verses to a bookseller's shop, and enquir'd there, how they might be sent to me. There happen'd to be in the same shop a gentleman, who hearing you speak of me, and seeing a paper in your hand, imagin'd it was a libel against me, and had you watch'd by his servant, till he knew both your name, and where you liv'd, of which he sent me word immediately. Though I have lost his Letter, yet I remember you live some where about St. Giles's,⁷ and are an only daughter. You must have pass'd your time in reading much better books than mine; or otherwise you cou'd not have arriv'd to so much knowledge as I find you have. But whether Sylph or Nymph, I know not: those fine creatures, as your

⁶ Mrs. Catharine Philips, a poetess of the last age, who received from her contemporaries the most extravagant praises, and is now nearly forgotten. She died in her thirty-fourth year, June 22, 1664. Her husband was probably a relation of Sir Richard Philipps, Baronet, who married our author's aunt.

⁷ She lived with her mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas, (as we learn from Curll,) in Dyot-street, St. Giles's.

author, Count Gabalis, assures us,⁸ have a mind to be christen'd, and since you do me the favour to desire a name from me, take that of CORINNA, if you please ; I mean not the lady with whom Ovid was in love, but the famous Theban poetess, who overcame Pindar five times, as historians tell us. I would have call'd you SAPHO, but that I hear you are handsomer. Since you find I am not altogether a stranger to you, be pleas'd to make me happier by a better knowledge of you ; and in stead of so many unjust praises which you give me, think me only worthy of being,

Madam,

Your most humble Servant,
and Admirer,

JOHN DRYDEN.

* In the " History of the Rosicrucian Doctrine of Spirits," from which Pope borrowed the machinery of THE RAPE OF THE LOCK. Le Comte de Gabalis was a fictitious name ; the real author being the Abbé de Villars, whose family name was Montfaucon. He was assassinated by one of his relations, on the road from Paris to Lyons, in 1675. His book appeared in 1670.—I do not, however, find there any such passage, as that here alluded to. The only one that bears any kind of resemblance to it, is in p. 17 of the English translation, (for I have not the original by me,) where it is said, that these inhabitants of the elements have a desire to unite themselves to mankind.—I suspect that the words—" have a mind to be christen'd—" relate, not to the Comte de Gabalis, but to Mrs. Thomas ; and that a preceding sentence was inadvertently omitted by the original publisher of this letter.

LETTER XXXIX.

TO MRS. ELIZABETH THOMAS, JUN.*

MADAM,

[Nov. 1699.]

THE great desire which I observe in you to write well, and those good parts which God Almighty and Nature have bestow'd on you, make me not to doubt, that by application to study, and the

* In printing this letter I have followed a transcript which I made some years ago from the original. It is preserved in a small volume in the Bodleian Library, consisting chiefly of Pope's original Letters to Henry Cromwell, which Mrs. Thomas sold to Curll, the bookseller, who published them unfaithfully. It afterwards fell into the hands of Dr. Richard Rawlinson, by whom it was bequeathed to that Library.

In the same volume is the copy of a Letter signed *Jon.* Dryden, addressed to Mrs. Elizabeth Cleaver, at Dr. Du Moulin's, Canterbury; dated Nov. 24, 1679; giving an account of the death of "dear Lady Clifford:" but I do not believe it to have been written by our author, because in all his letters that I have seen, he writes either his Christian name at length, or the initial letter of it, or the first two letters (*Jo.*); and he had a kinsman, Jonathan Dryden, fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge, who has thus subscribed his name (*Jon.* Dryden) to an original letter addressed to Dr. Busby, preserved in the British Museum. The letter on the death of Lady Clifford is of very little value.

reading of the best authors, you may be absolute mistress of poetry. 'Tis an unprofitable art, to those who profess it; but you, who write only for your diversion, may pass your hours with pleasure in it, and without prejudice; always avoiding (as I know you will,) the licence which Mrs. Behn¹ allow'd her self, of writeing loosely, and giveing, if I may have leave to say so, some scandall to the modesty of her sex. I confess, I am the last man who ought, in justice, to arraign her, who have been my self too much a libertine in most of my poems; which I shou'd be well contented I had time either to purge, or to see them fairly burn'd. But this I need not say to you, who are too well born, and too well principled, to fall into that mire.

In the mean time, I would advise you not to trust too much to Virgil's PASTORALS; for as excellent as they are, yet Theocritus is far before him, both in softness of thought, and simplicity of expression.² Mr. Creech has translated that

¹ Mrs. Thomas had mentioned, in her letter to Dryden, that in her verses she had made Mrs. Behn her model. She meant, she says, to imitate only her *numbers*.

² Dr. Johnson differed from our author on this subject, preferring the Pastorals of Virgil to those of Theocritus. "Virgil," says that great critick, "wrote, when there had been a larger influx of knowledge into the world, than when Theocritus lived. Theocritus does not abound in description, though living in a beautiful country: the manners painted are coarse and gross. Virgil has much more description, more sentiment, more of nature, and more of art." Boswell's Life of Johnson, iv. 2. third edit.

Greek poet, which I have not read in English. If you have any considerable faults, they consist chiefly in the choice of words, and the placing them so as to make the verse run smoothly; but I am at present so taken up with my own studies, that I have not leisure to descend to particulars; being, in the mean time, the fair Corinna's

Most humble and most

faithful Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

P. S. I keep your two copies,³ till you want them, and are pleas'd to send for them.

LETTER XL.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

Saturday, Nov. 26th. [1699.]

AFTER a long expectation, Madam, at length your happy letter came to your servant, who almost despair'd of it. The onely comfort I had, was, my hopes of seeing you, and that you de-

³ The Pastoral Elegy already mentioned, and "THE TRIPLE LEAGUE, written in imitation of Mrs. Behn," and inserted afterwards in Mrs. Thomas's Poems. She had sent these two papers of verses to our author, (who was then unknown to her,) with a letter requesting that he would peruse and correct them.

fer'd writeing, because you wou'd surprise me with your presence, and beare your relations company to town.—Your neighbour, Mr. Price, has given me an apprehension that my cousin, your father, is in some danger of being made Sheriff the following yeare; but I hope 'tis a jealousy without ground, and that the warm season only keeps him in the country.—If you come up next week, you will be entertain'd with a new tragedy, which the authour of it, one Mr. Dennis, cryes up at an excessive rate; and Colonel Codrington, who has seen it, prepares the world to give it loud applauses.⁴ 'Tis called *IPHIGENIA*, and imitated from Euripides, an old Greek poet. This is to be acted at Betterton's house; and another play of the same name is very shortly to come on the stage in Drury-Lane.—I was lately to visite the Duchess of Norfolk;⁵ and she speaks of you with much affection and respect. Your cousin Montague,⁶ after the present session of parliament, will

⁴ See p. 88. n. 2. Colonel Codrington wrote the Epilogue to it.

⁵ Mary, the daughter of Henry Mordaunt, the second Earl of Peterborough, and wife of Thomas the seventh Duke of Norfolk, who at this time was soliciting to be divorced from her by Act of Parliament, for criminal conversation with Sir John Germaine. See vol. i. part i. p. 415, n. The Duke of Norfolk was a distant relation of our poet's wife.

⁶ The Right Hon. Charles Montague, who on the 2d of June 1699, had been deprived of the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer; and a few days before this

be created Earl of Bristoll,⁷ and I hope is much my friend : but I doubt I am in no condition of having a kindness done, haveing the Chancellour⁸ my enemy ; and not being capable of renouncing the cause for which I have so long suffer'd.—My Cousin Driden of Chesterton is in town, and lodges with my brother in Westminster.⁹ My sonn has seen him, and was very kindly receiv'd by him.—Let this letter stand for nothing, because it has nothing but news in it, and has so little of the main business, which is to assure my fair Cousine how much I am her admirer, and her

Most devoted Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

letter was written, (Nov. 15) was removed from the Treasury, of which he was then one of the Lords Commissioners ; not *First* Lord, as erroneously stated in Beatson's POLITICAL INDEX, i. 242. Mrs. Creed, (Mrs. Steward's mother,) and Mr. Montague, were second cousins. 1

⁷ Such, it appears, was the rumour of the day. He did not, however, obtain either the title of Bristol, or a peerage, at that time ; but about a year afterwards, on the 13th of December, 1700, he was created Baron of Halifax, and soon after the accession of George I. was made an Earl, with the same title.

⁸ Lord Somers.—Does not this passage add some support to what has been suggested in our author's Life, (vol. i. p. i. p. 165,) that a part of Dryden's SATIRE TO HIS MUSE was written in his younger days by this great man ?

⁹ Erasmus Dryden, who lived in King's-street, Westminster, and was a grocer. In Dec. 1710, he succeeded to the title of Baronet.

I write no recommendations of service to our friends at Oundle, because I suppose they are leaving that place; but I wish my Cousin Stuart a boy, as like Miss Jem:* as he and you can make him.¹ My wife and son are never forgetful of their acknowledgments to you both.

*For Mrs. Stuart, Att
Cotterstock near Oundle,
in the County of Northton, These.*

*To be left at the Posthouse
in Oundle.*

LETTER XLI.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

Thursday, Dec. the 14th, 1699.

MADAM,

WHEN I have either too much business, or want of health, to write to you, I count my time is lost, or at least my conscience accuses me that I spend it ill. At this time my head is full of cares, and my body ill at ease. My book is printing,² and

* Jemima, Mrs. Steward's youngest daughter, probably then four or five years old. Hence *Miss Jem.* See p. 68, n. 9.

¹ This friendly wish was not crowned with success. Mrs. Steward had three daughters, but never bore a son.

² FABLES, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

my bookseller makes no hast.³ I had last night at bed-time an unwelcome fit of vomiting; and my sonn, Charles, lyes sick upon his bed with the colique, which has been violent upon him for almost a week. With all this, I cannot but remember that you accus'd me of barbarity, I hope, in jeast onely, for mistaking one Sheriff for another, which proceeded from my want of heareing well. I am heartily sorry that a chargeable office is fallen on my Cousin Stuart.⁴ But my Cousin Driden comforts me, that it must have come one time or other, like the small-pox; and better have it young, than old. I hope it will leave no great marks behind it, and that your fortune will no more feel it than your beauty, by the addition of a year's wearing. My cousine, your mother, was heer yesterday, to see my wife, though I had not the happiness to be at home.—Both the *IPHIGENIAS* have been play'd with bad success;⁵ and being

³ In the latter part of the last century, the vowel (*e*) seems by general agreement to have been ejected from certain classes of verbs and substantives; as if the proportion of consonants to vowels were not already too great in our language. On this ground, they wrote *mou'd*, *prov'd*, *tast*, *hast*, *plac'd*, *oblig'd*, &c.; but this unsightly practice has for these last fifty years been very properly discontinued, at least in most printed works.

⁴ Elmes Steward, Esq., was appointed Sheriff of the county of Northampton in Nov. 1699.

⁵ Dennis's *IPHIGENIA* was performed at the Theatre in Little Lincoln's Fields; and *ACHILLES*, or *IPHIGENIA*

both acted one against the other in the same week, clash'd together, like two rotten ships which cou'd not endure the shock, and sunk to rights.—The King's Proclamation against vice and

GENIA IN AULIS, written by Abel Boyer, and (if we are to believe the author) corrected by Dryden, was acted at the Theatre in Drury-Lane. Dennis says in his Preface, that the success of his play was "neither despicable nor extraordinary;" but Gildon in his "Comparison between the two Stages," 8vo. 1702, informs us, that it was acted but six times; and that the other tragedy, after four representations, was laid aside.

It is extraordinary that Dryden should not have mentioned Farquhar's TRIP TO THE JUBILEE, which we learn from Boyer's Preface, had been acted at Drury-Lane with considerable success, *immediately before* his ACHILLES was produced. "Another difficulty (says the author,) this play laboured under, was, its being acted at a time when the whole town was so much and so justly diverted with the TRIP TO THE JUBILEE." One of Farquhar's biographers says, that this comedy was exhibited *fifty-three* times in that season; but the theatrical history of that period confutes his assertion. According to Gildon, Betterton having gained a great deal of money by reviving KING HENRY THE EIGHTH, and King HENRY THE FOURTH, (which in a letter written Jan. 28, 1699-1700, is said to have drawn "all the town *more than any new* play that has been performed of late." See vol. i. part i. p. 329, n.) the manager of the theatre in Drury-lane, after the failure of his IPHIGENIA, produced Ben Jonson's FOX, and AL-CHEMIST, and THE SILENT WOMAN; and towards the end of the season brought out Fletcher's PILGRIM, altered by Vanbrugh, with additions by Dryden; exertions, which would scarcely have been necessary, if Farquhar's

profaneness is issued out in print;⁶ but a deep disease is not to be cur'd with a slight medicine. The parsons, who must read it, will find as little effect from it, as from their dull sermons: 'tis a scarecrow, which will not fright many birds from preying on the fields and orchards.—The best news I heare is, that the land will not be charg'd very deep this yeare: let that comfort you for your Shrievalty, and continue me in your good graces, who am, fair Cousine,

Your most faithfull oblig'd Servant,

JO: DRYDEN.

For Mrs. Stuart,

Att Cotterstock near Oundle,

in Northamptonshyre,

These.

To be left with the Postmaster

of Oundle.

comedy had attracted fifty-three audiences. It is more probable, that it was not performed oftener than eighteen or twenty times at the utmost.

⁶ In the London Gazette, No. 3557, Thursday, Dec. 14, 1699, it is mentioned, that a Proclamation for preventing and *punishing* immorality and profaneness, had been issued out on the 11th instant.

LETTER XLII.

TO MRS. ELIZABETH THOMAS, JUN.

MADAM,

Friday, Dec. 29, 1699.

I HAVE sent your poems back again, after having kept them so long from you ; by which you see I am like the rest of the world, an impudent borrower, and a bad pay-master. You take more care of my health than it deserves : that of an old man is always crazy, and at present, mine is worse than usual, by a St. Anthony's fire in one of my legs : though the swelling is much abated, yet the pain is not wholly gone, and I am too weak to stand upon it. If I recover, it is possible I may attempt Homer's Iliad. A specimen of it (the first book) is now in the press, among other poems of mine, which will make a volume in folio, of twelve shillings' price ; and will be publish'd within this month.⁷ I desire, fair author, that you will be pleas'd to continue me in your good graces, who am with all sincerity and gratitude,

Your most humble Servant,

and Admirer,

JOHN DRYDEN.

⁷ Relying on this passage, I once supposed that the book here spoken of, his FABLES, was published in January ; but it did not appear till the first week in March.

LETTER XLIII.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

MADAM,

Feb. 23d. [1699-1700.]

THOUGH I have not leisure to thank you for the last trouble I gave you, yet haveing by me two lampoons lately made, I know not but they may be worth your reading; and therefore have presum'd to send them. I know not the authours; but the town will be gheasing. The BALLAD OF THE PEWS, which are lately rais'd higher at St. James's church,* is by some sayd to be Mr. Manwareing,[†] or my Lord Peterborough: the poem of THE CONFEDERATES some think to be Mr. Walsh: the copies are both lik'd. And there are really two factions of ladyes, for the two play-houses. If you do not understand the names of some persons mention'd, I can help you to the knowledge of them. You know, Sir Tho: Skipwith is master of the play-house in Drury-lane; and my Lord Scarsdale is the patron of Betterton's house, being in love with somebody there. The Lord Scott is second sonn to the Duchess of Monmouth. I

* Our author's memory here deceived him. From the ballad itself we learn, that it was the *Chapel Royal* at St. James's, in which the pews were raised.

[†] Arthur Maynwaring. See vol. i. part i. p. 546, n. 8.

need not tell you who my Lady Darentwater is;
but it may be you know not her Lord is a poet,
and none of the best. Forgive this hasty billet,
from

Your most oblig'd Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

For Mrs. Stewart,

*Att Cotterstock near Oundle,
in Northamptonshyre, These.*

To be left with the Postmaster of Oundle.

The two lampoons above mentioned do not appear to have been preserved by Mrs. Stewart; at least they have not come to my hands. However, after some fruitless inquiry concerning the former of them, which I expected to have found in the Pepysian Collection in Magdalen College, in Cambridge, I have recovered them both.—Either Dryden by the Ballad of the Pews, meant only to describe it as a Ballad concerning the pews, which, &c. or it afterwards assumed a new name; for it appears in the STATE POEMS, vol. iii. p. 372, under the following title:

A new Ballad, call'd,

THE BRAWNY BISHOP'S COMPLAINT.

To the tune of—*Packington's Pound.*⁹

1.

WHEN Burnet perceiv'd that the beautiful dames
Who flock'd to the chapel of hilly St. James,

⁹ This tune was extremely popular in the last century, many ballads, both on political subjects and subjects of gallantry, having been adapted to it. It is at least as old as the time of King James the First, being introduced in

On their lovers the kindest of looks did bestow,
And smil'd not on him, while he bellow'd ' below,

Ben Jonson's BARTHOLOMEW FAIR, 1614, where Nightingale, a ballad-singer, sings a very long song to this tune, which is there called *Pagginton's Pound*, and is said so be a country-dance. In that ballad each stanza consists of eleven lines, and ends with this couplet, by the first words of which the tune was also frequently described :

" Youth, youth, thou had'st better been starv'd by thy nurse,

" Than live to be hanged for cutting a purse."

But who Mr. Packington was, or where his pound was situated, our musical antiquaries have not informed us. Perhaps he was a *gallant* of those days, whose name was attached to a country-dance, in which each couple successively was encircled by the other dancers, and thus placed in a kind of *pound*.

Among other old popular airs, this was adopted by Gay in his BEGGAR'S OPERA, where it is introduced in the third act, sc. ii.

" Thus gamesters united in friendship are found," &c.

' According to Shippen's sarcastick representation, (FACTION DISPLAYED, 4to, 1704,) Bishop Burnet's voice was uncommonly loud :

" Full of such stuff, he would have giv'n it vent,

" But that black ARIO's fierceness did prevent :

" A Scotch, seditious, unbelieving priest,

" The brawny chaplain of *the Calves-head Feast* ;

" Who first his patron, then his prince betray'd,

" And does the church he's sworn to guard, invade.

" Warm with rebellious rage, he thus began :

" To talk of calling life again, is vain.

To the Princess² he went,
 With pious intent,
 This dangerous ill in the church to prevent :
 O Madam ! quoth he, our religion is lost,
 If the ladies thus ogle the *Knights of the Toast*.³

" Peace to the GLORIOUS dead ! We justly mourn
 " His ashes :—ever sacred be his urn !
 " But here, my lords, we are together met,
 " To vow to ANNA's sceptre endless hate.
 " For since my hope of Winton is expired,
 " With just revenge and indignation fired,
 " I'll write, and talk, and preach her title down ;
 " My thund'ring voice shall shake her in the throne ;
 " Do you the sword, and I'll engage the gown." }

² The Princess Anne, who in 1683 had been married to George, Prince of Denmark. Queen Mary being at this time dead, the Princess of Denmark was now the first lady in the English Court.

³ Not long before this ballad was written, a Society of Gentlemen had been instituted, who were distinguished by the title of the *Knights of the Toast*, from their drinking ladies' healths, in regular succession, after dinner ; which custom was then a novelty, as was the term *toast*. No dictionary before the Revolution, that I have seen, acknowledges the word, thus applied. According to Addison, however, it was familiar in this sense at an earlier period, and " had its rise from an accident in the town of Bath, in the time of Charles the Second."

" It happened, (says he) that on a publick day, a celebrated beauty of those times was in the Cross Bath ; and one of the crowd of her admirers took a glass of the water in which the fair one stood, and drank her health to the company. There was in the place a gay fellow,

Your Highness observes, how I labour and sweat,
Their affections to raise, and new flames to beget;

half fuddled; who offered to jump in, and swore, though he liked not the liquor, he would have the *toast*. He was opposed in his resolution; yet this whim gave foundation to the present honour, which is done to the lady we mention in our liquors, who has ever since been called a *TOAST*."—TATLER, No. 24, June 4, 1709. In the 129th number of the same periodical paper, Pasquin, in a letter from Rome, desires an explanation of this *strange* term, and requests to know, whether the ladies so called are *Nuns*, or *Lay-sisters*.

Colonel Heveningham, who will be mentioned again hereafter, not long before this ballad appeared, had written a lampoon against the Knights of the Toast, to which a reply may be found in the *STATE POEMS*, vol. ii. p. 256, beginning with these lines:

"O Harry, can'st thou find no subject fit,

"But thy best friends, to exercise thy wit?

"No *order* but the *Toast*, to ridicule," &c.

This Society appears to have given rise soon afterwards to the KIT-KAT Club, (see vol. i. part i. p. 525;) and the beauties whom that Club celebrated by verses written on their drinking glasses, were all called *Ladies of the Toast*. See "A Decree for conducting the treaty between Dr. Swift and Mrs. Anne Long:—" And whereas the said Mrs. Long, humbly acknowledging and allowing the right of the said Doctor, doth yet insist upon certain privileges and exceptions, as a *Lady of the TOAST*," &c. Nichols's Suppl. to Swift's Works, iii. 96.

The first lady who was thus distinguished, appears to have been Lord Lansdowne's MIRA, Mrs. Frances Brudenell, the youngest daughter of Francis, Lord Brudenell,

And sure when I preach, all the world will agree,
That their ears and their eyes should be pointed on me :

But now I can't find

One beauty so kind,

As my parts to regard, or my presence to mind :

who died in the life-time of his father, Robert, the second Earl of Cardigan. Hence, on one of the toasting-glasses of the Kit-Kat Club, the following verses were inscribed in 1703, probably by Granville :

" Imperial Juno gave her matchless grace,

" And Hebe's youthful bloom adorns her face :

" Bright as the star that leads the evening host,

" Brudenell *precedes*, the glory of the Toast."

So also in THE CELEBRATED BEAUTIES, a poem, written about the year 1704 :

" What mighty glories shall this fair adorn,

" Allied to Mira, and of Richmond born !

" Mira so bright to kindle Granville's fire,

" How did she shine, that could such warmth inspire !

" Richmond so great, to give that title fame,

" And more than equal *her, from whom our toasting came.*"

The lady here celebrated was Lady Louisa Lenox, (then about ten years old,) daughter of Charles Lenox, Duke of Richmond, by Anne Brudenell, Mira's eldest sister.

Frances Brudenell, the original Lady of the Toast, was first married to Charles Livingston, Earl of Newburgh in Scotland ; and secondly, to Richard Lord Bellew, an Irish Peer. She lived, I believe, to near the end of the reign of George the Second. In 1727, Dr. King of Oxford, who had some dispute with her concerning property in Ireland, wrote a bitter satirical poem, entitled THE TOAST, of which this lady is the heroine. It was first printed in Dublin ; and was inserted, with many additions, in the unpublished collection of Dr. King's works, printed in 4to. at Oxford, in 1736.

Nay, I scarce have a sight of any one face,
But those of old Oxford,⁴ and ugly Ardglass.⁵

In one of Settle's pieces, purchased some time ago, Mr. Bindley found a loose sheet containing a manuscript poem written by him, addressed "to the most renowned the President, [probably either Lord Dorset or Mr. Montague,] and the rest of the Knights of the most noble Order of the TOAST;" in which the poet endeavours to propitiate the person to whom these verses served as a begging Petition, by asserting the dignity and antiquity of this illustrious Society. They appear to have been written in 1699.

"Why should the noble Windsor garters boast
"Their fame, above the Knighthood of the Toast?
"Is't on their first original they build?
"Their high-priz'd knighthood these to you must yield.
"A lady dropp'd a garter at a ball;
"A toy for their foundation;—was that all?
"Suppose the nymph that lost it was divine;
"The garter's but a relique from the shire:
"The Toast includes the deity;—not one star,
"But the whole constellation of the Fair."

The custom of drinking ladies' healths, in regular succession, at this time being novel, was considered as a kind of foppery; and hence we often find "*toasting beaus*," introduced in the poems of that period.

⁴ Diana, the daughter of George Kirke, Esq. and second wife of Aubery de Vere, the twentieth Earl of Oxford; to whom she was married about the year 1674. See p. 11, n. 9.

⁵ Honora, first married to Thomas, Lord Cromwell in England, and Earl of Ardglass in Ireland; and at this time the wife of Francis Cuffe, Esq. She was a daughter of Dr. Michael Boyle, Archbishop of Armagh, and Lord Chancellor of Ireland from 1665 to 1685.

3.

These sorrowful matrons, with hearts full of truth,
 Repent for the manifold sins of their youth :
 The rest with their tattle my harmony spoil ;
 And Burlington,⁶ Anglesea,⁷ Kingston,⁸ and Boyle,⁹
 Their minds entertain
 With thoughts so profane,
 'Tis a mercy to find that at church they contain ;
 Even Henningham's¹ shapes their weak fancies entice,
 And rather than me they will ogle the Vice.²

⁶ Juliana, daughter of Henry Noel, second son of Edward, Viscount Gainsborough, and wife of Charles, the second Earl of Burlington and Corke ; by whom she was mother of Richard, Earl of Burlington, the friend of Pope.

⁷ Lady Catharine Darnley, natural daughter of King James the Second, by Catharine Sidley, whom in 1685-6 he created Countess of Dorchester. Their daughter, who was born in 1683, was married October 28, 1699, to James, the third Earl of Anglesea ; from whom, after about a year's cohabitation, she was separated for his cruel treatment of her. She afterwards (March 1, 1705-6,) married John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire. She died, March 13, 1742-3. A curious character of this lady, supposed to have been written by herself, may be found in Pope's Works.

⁸ Mary, daughter of William Fielding, Earl of Denbigh, and wife of Evelyn Pierrepont, Earl of Kingston. She was mother of the celebrated Lady Mary Wortley Montague.

⁹ Perhaps Arethusa Boyle, a daughter of Charles, Lord Clifford of Lanesborough, by his second wife. This lady afterwards married — Vernon, Esq., son of Secretary Vernon. She was half-sister to Charles, Earl of Burlington, above mentioned ; and therefore likely to have been grouped with his lady.

4.

These practices, Madam, my preaching disgrace :
Shall laymen enjoy the just rights of my place ?
Sure all may lament my condition for hard,
To thrash in the pulpit without a reward.

Then pray condescend
Such disorders to end,
And from the ripe vineyards such labourers send ;
Or build up the seats, that the beauties may see
The face of no brawny pretender but me.¹

¹ The Honourable Henry Heveningham, who is sometimes called in the lampoons of the last age, Colonel Heveningham. In Motteux's *GENTLEMAN'S JOURNAL* are two songs, written by Colonel Heveningham ; and that poet's tragedy, entitled *BEAUTY IN DISTRESS*, was dedicated to him, in 1698. In the *Answer to a Satire* in the *STATE POEMS*, iii. 148, he is called—*well-shaped He'n-ingham* ; and in *THE LOVERS' SESSION*, a lampoon in the same collection, written about 1682, in imitation of Suckling's *SESSION OF THE POETS*, he is thus described :

" Harry He'ningham thought himself sure of a grant ;
" But, O foolish, cries out villain Frank, he's a *Cant* ;
" His mistress ne'er knows, so odd 'tis exprest,
" Whether he means to make love or a jest :
" For he puts on so many several faces,
" Is so full of his frank familiar grimaces,
" They cannot but think—he's acting a part,
" And his passionate speeches has gotten by heart."

² The Hon. Peregrine Bertie, a younger son of Robert, Earl of Lindsey, and Lady Elizabeth Wharton, half-sister of Thomas, Earl of Wharton. He was appointed Vice-Chamberlain in 1690, and held that office till his death in 1711.

³ In the last age, and the early part of the present cen-

5.

The Princess, by rude importunity press'd,
Tho' she laugh'd at his reasons, allow'd his request :

tury, ladies and gentlemen had so few opportunities of meeting, that the Church was frequently employed for the purposes of gallantry. Hence we find in the *TATLER*, No. 166, May 2, 1710, (written by Steele,) the following Advertisement, addressed to the belles and beaux of that period :

"Whereas the several Church-wardens of most of the parishes within the bills of mortality have in an earnest manner applied themselves by way of petition, and have also made a presentment of the vain and loose deportment, during divine service, of persons of too great figure in all their said parishes for their reproof; and whereas it is therein set forth, that by salutations given each other, hints, shrugs, ogles, playing of fans, fooling with canes at their mouths, and other wanton gesticulations, their whole congregation appears rather a theatrical audience than an house of devotion: it is hereby ordered, that all *canes, cravats, bosom-laces, muffs, fans, snuff-boxes*, and all other instruments made use of to give persons unbecoming airs, shall be immediately forfeited and sold; and of the sum arising from the sale thereof a ninth part shall be paid to the poor, and the *rest* to the Overseers."

See also a Song by Motteux, entitled "the Bachelor's Wish," and published in the *GENTLEMAN'S JOURNAL*, in September, 1692 :

"One modestly free, not too proud of her means,
"And tho' she writes woman, not out of her teens; - -
"Who visits the church, tho' *custom* can't move her
"To play there at *bo-peep*, 'cross a *pew*, with a lover :
"Yet let her with care shun a contrary evil,
"Lest angel at church prove at home a mere devil."

And now Britain's nymphs, in a Protestant reign,
Are lock'd up at pray'rs, like the virgins in Spain;
And all are undone,
As sure as a gun,

Whenever a woman is kept like a nun.
If any kind man from bondage will save her,
The lass will in gratitude grant him the favour.

THE CONFEDERATES: ⁴

or, The first Happy Day of THE ISLAND PRINCESS. ⁵

YE vile traducers of the female kind,
Who think the fair to cruelty inclin'd,
Recant your error, and with shame confess
Their tender care of Skipwith⁶ in distress:

⁴ These spritely and elegant verses are also preserved in the STATE POEMS, vol. ii. p. 248.

⁵ Soon after the Revolution some original dramas were produced, with musical entertainments intermixed; and others were altered, and adapted to musick; among which we find THE PROPHETESS, THE FAIRY QUEEN, THE INDIAN QUEEN, KING ARTHUR, DON QUIXOTE, and BONDUCA. These pieces, by the aid of Purcell's musick, having had great success, and the taste of the town for musical dramas growing daily stronger, the manager of the theatre in Drury-Lane, in 1699, employed Peter Motteux to convert Fletcher's ISLAND PRINCESS (which Tate had unsuccessfully revived a few years before) into a semi-opera; for which musick was composed by Jeremiah Clarke, (who, in 1697, had the honour of setting Dryden's ALEXANDER'S FEAST, when it was originally performed,) Daniel Purcell, and Richard Leveridge. Of

For now, to vindicate this monarch's right,
 The Scotch and English equal charms unite;
 In solemn leagues contending nations join,
 And Britain labours with the vast design.

the piece itself an anonymous writer thus speaks in 1702;
 STATE POEMS, iv. 361:

"Motteux and D'Urfey are for nothing fit,
 "But to supply with songs their want of wit.
 "Had not THE ISLAND PRINCESS been adorn'd
 "With tunes and pompous scenes, she had been scorn'd:
 "What was not Fletcher's, no more sense contains
 "Than he that wrote THE JUBILEE has brains;
 "Which ne'er had pleas'd the town, or purchased fame,
 "But that 'twas christen'd with a modish name."

* In a Petition presented to Queen Anne, about Nov. 1709, Charles Killigrew, Dr. Charles D'Avenant, Sir Thomas Skipwith, Baronet, Christopher Rich, William Collier, Lord Guilford, John Lord Hervey, Anne Shadwell, widow, and eleven other persons, are stated to have been then the proprietors of the two patents, which were granted by Charles II. in 1660, for establishing two companies of comedians, and were united in 1682; but when Sir Thomas Skipwith first acquired an interest in those united patents, I have not been able to ascertain.—It appears from the Report of the Attorney and Solicitor-General, (Edward Northey and Robert Raymond,) to whom a Petition of certain of these proprietors was referred in Feb. 1709-10, that Christopher Rich got a footing in Drury-Lane Theatre on the 24th of March, 1690-91, by Alexander D'Avenant assigning to him all his interest in that theatre, which in 1687 he derived from a similar assignment made to him by Charles D'Avenant, probably his brother; and from that time Rich has been considered as the principal manager of the entertainments exhibited there. In the Dedication of THE WORLD IN THE MOON

An Opera with loud applause is play'd,
Which fam'd Motteux in soft heroicks made;
And all the sworn Confederates resort,
To view the triumph of their sovereign's Court.

In bright array the well-train'd host appears;
Supreme command brave Derwentwater⁷ bears;
And next in front George Howard's bride⁸ does shine,
The living honour of that ancient line.
The wings are led by chiefs of matchless worth:
Great Hamilton,⁹ the glory of the North,

to him, in 1697, that piece, which was acted at the Theatre in Dorset Garden, is said to have been played *under his own roof*; and in 1706 THE FAIR EXAMPLE, a comedy, was dedicated "to Christopher Rich, Chief Patentee, Manager, and Governor of the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane." We see, however, that at an early period Sir Thomas Skipwith was, for some time at least, invested with this sovereignty; and Cibber says, that "he had an equal share with Rich in the property;" which he probably derived from some of the Killigrew family. About the year 1708 he transferred his right, whatever it was, to Colonel Brett; and died in 1710.

⁷ Mary Tudor, natural daughter of Charles the Second, by Mary Davies, a celebrated singer on the stage. See vol. iii. p. 269, n. She was born in 1673, and married in 1687-8 to Francis, Lord Radcliffe; who, on the death of his father in 1696-7, became Earl of Derwentwater, then corruptly written (as it was sounded,) *Darentwater*.

⁸ Arabella, daughter of Sir Edward Allen, Bart. She first married Francis Thompson, Esq. and was at this time the wife of Lord George Howard, (eldest son of Henry, the sixth Duke of Norfolk, by his second wife,) who died in March, 1720-21.

⁹ Elizabeth, daughter of Digby, Lord Gerard; and

Commands the left ; and England's dear delight,
The bold Fitzwalter¹ charges on the right.
The Prince, to welcome his propitious friends,
A throne erected on the stage ascends.

He said :—Blest angels ! for great ends design'd,
The best, and sure the fairest, of your kind,
How shall I praise, or in what numbers sing
Your just compassion of an injured King ?
Till you appear'd, no prospect did remain,
My crown and falling sceptre to maintain ;
No noisy beaus in all my realm were found ;
No beauteous nymphs my empty boxes crown'd :
But still I saw, O dire heart-breaking woe !
My own sad consort² in the foremost row.
But this auspicious day new empire gives ;
And if by your support my nation lives,
For you my bards shall tune the sweetest lays,
Norton³ and Henley⁴ shall resound your praise ;

second wife of James, Duke of Hamilton, who was killed in a duel by Lord Mohun, in Nov. 1712.

¹ Elizabeth, daughter of Charles Bertie, of Uffington, in the county of Lincoln, Esq., a younger son of Montague, the second Earl of Lindsey. She was at this time the wife of Charles Mildmay, the second Lord Fitzwalter, of that family.

² Margaret, daughter of George, Lord Chandos, and relict of William Brownlow, of Humby, in Lincolnshire. She is represented in one of the lampoons of that day, as much older than her husband :

" Sackville wants leisure to attend his Muse,

" His time is taken up with these reviews,

" And Skipwith with his *grannam* of a spouse."

³ Richard Norton, of Southwick, in Hampshire, Esq. Cibber's comedy, entitled LOVE'S LAST SHIFT, was dedicated to this gentleman, in Feb. 1696-7. In " A Dia-

And I, not last of the harmonious train,
Will give a loose to my poetick vein.

To him great Derwentwater thus replied:
Thou mighty Prince, in many dangers tried,

logue between Poet Motteux and Patron Henningham," who is charged with writing the Dedication of *BEAUTY IN DISTRESS* to himself, (*STATE POEMS*, ii. 251,) he is thus introduced:

"PATRON. Here, Sirra, here's five guineas then.

"POET. What do you mean? you promis'd ten;

"And Norton gave a hundred pieces,

"To own a better thing than this is,

"Even to Southerne,—."

The piece here alluded to is *PAUSANIAS*, a tragedy, which Southerne published in 1696, without the author's name; who, we learn from *THE DISPENSARY*, was Mr. Norton. Garth highly commends it:

"And Britain, since *PAUSANIAS* was writ,

"Knows Spartan virtue, and Athenian wit."

In my copy of *PHAETON*, a tragedy, by Gildon, 4to. 1698, (which is dedicated to Charles Montague,) is the following inscription to this gentleman, in Gildon's handwriting, which accompanied a presentation copy, and probably produced the effect intended by the poet, a donation of a few guineas:

"Domino Domino

"Ricardo Norton, de Southwick in agro Hamptoniensi, Armigero; viro eximio, tam virtutibus quam genere claro, Musis dilectissimo, ipsarumque cultorum fautori colendissimo, libellum hunc offert

"CAROLUS GILDON."

Mr. Norton died Dec. 10, 1732, in his sixty-ninth year. His extraordinary will, which was made in 1714, and the last codicil in Nov. 1731, may be found in *THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE*, vol. iii. p. 57. He left a

Born to dispute severe decrees of fate,
 The nursing father of a sickly state;
 Behold the pillars of thy lawful reign!
 Thy regal rights we promise to maintain:
 Our brightest nymphs shall thy dominions grace,
 With all the beauties of the Highland race;
 The beaus shall make thee their peculiar care,
 For beaus will always wait upon the fair:
 For thee kind Beereton and bold Webbe shall fight,⁵
 Lord Scott⁶ shall ogle, and my spouse shall write:⁷

real estate of £.6000. *per ann.* and personal property to the amount of £.60,000l. "to the poor; that is to say," (says the testator) "to the poor hungry, and thirsty, naked, and strangers, sick and wounded, and prisoners, *to the end of the world.*" He also bequeathed two sapphire rings to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and a ring with a holy lamb enameled thereon, and set round with diamonds, to each of the Bishops, "to be by them, and all and every of them, daily and successively worn, *to the end of the world.*"—Of this will, which is very long, was all written with his own hand, and was lodged for several years in the custody of the Bishop of Winchester, he appointed the Parliament of Great Britain, executors. But on a trial at Bar in the King's Bench, in May, 1739, the testator was found to be insane, and his will was set aside.

⁴ Anthony Henley, of the Grange in Hampshire, Esq., a man of parts and learning, who died in 1711. He was father of Robert, the first Earl of Northington, Lord Chancellor; and at this time represented Andover in Parliament. There are three letters written by him to Swift, in Swift's Works, vol. xviii. Garth dedicated his DISPENSARY to this gentleman; and Southerne, in the Dedication of PAUSANIAS to him, says, that he was at once a master of poetry, painting, and musick. The

Thus shall thy Court our English youth engross,
And all the Scotch, from Drummond down to Ross.*

Now in his throne the King securely sat ;
But O ! this change alarm'd the rival state ;

Epilogue to PAUSANIAS was written by Mr. Henley, who was probably a friend of Mr. Norton.

* Perhaps General Webbe, whose "*firm platoon*" was afterwards celebrated by Tickell. Of the prowess of Mr. Beereton no memorials have been discovered.

† Lord Henry Scott, second surviving son of James, Duke of Monmouth ; who was born in 1676. In 1706 he was created Earl of Deloraine, and died about 1730.

‡ The Earl of Derwentwater's poetry, which appears to have been composed when he was Lord Radcliffe, is spoken of with contempt in a lampoon written about this period. The person addressed is Colonel Heveningham, who has been already mentioned :

" Lord Radcliffe's poems might thy satire fit ;

" But what hast thou to do with men of wit ?"

Again, *ibid.*

" — if to charge the fair thy fancy moves,

" Write Popham's life, or Madam Griffin's loves.

" One labour too to Ranelagh is due,

" Who with false beauty does deface the true ;

" And may arrive with diligence and care

" In time to rival *Derwentwater's heir*.

" On such as these thy *doggrel* numbers try," &c.

§ In the last age, and the early part of this century, the *o* in *engross* was pronounced short, as in *loss*. So Pope, who perhaps remembered the lines before us :

" But all our praises why should lords *engross* ?

" Rise, honest Muse ! and sing the Man of *Ross*."

Pope had diligently read the STATE POEMS, and may be sometimes traced in them. Thus, " Peace is my dear

Besides, he lately bribed, in breach of laws,
 The fair deserter of her uncle's cause.⁹
 This rous'd the Monarch of the neighbouring crown,
 A drowsy Prince, too careless of renown.¹
 Yet prompt to vengeance, and untaught to yield;
 Great Scarsdale² challeng'd Skipwith to the field.
 Whole shoals of poets for this chief declare,
 And vassal players attend him to the war.
 Skipwith with joy the dreadful summons took,
 And brought an equal force; then Scarsdale spoke:

delight—" is taken from a former line in the poem before us. So in "an Essay in opposition to the Essay on Satire," *ibid.*

"So bawling H——n and K—— the mute,
 "With *noise and nonsense* fill up the *dispute*."

Whence perhaps in the DUNCIAD, we have—

"With *noise* and Norton, *brangling* and Breval."

Again, in vol. iii. p. 135:

"[The] little *underlings* that sit about,
 "Pretend they *know the author by his style*;
 "I've eas'd my mind, and will securely *smile*."

So, in the Epistle to Arbuthnot:

"—— and can I choose but *smile*,
 "When every *coxcomb* knows me by my *style*."

⁹ This "fair deserter" appears to have been the actress whom Lord Henry Scott admired, and was perhaps the niece of Mrs. Betterton. I suspect, the person meant was Mrs. Moore, who performed in THE PRETENDERS, a comedy, acted at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn Fields, in 1698; and in Farquhar's LOVE AND A BOTTLE, acted in Drury-Lane Theatre in 1699. She was probably an actress of some estimation, having spoken the Epilogue to the former play.

¹ Betterton, who was at this time near sixty-five years

Thou bane of empire, foe to human kind,
Whom neither leagues nor laws of nations bind;
For cares of high poetick sway unfit,
Thou shame of learning, and reproach of wit;
Restore bright Helen to my longing sight,
Or now my signal shall begin the fight.

Hold, said the foe, thy warlike host remove,
Nor let our bards the chance of battle prove:
Should death deprive us of their shining parts,
What would become of all the liberal arts?
Should Dennis fall, whose high majestick wit,
And awful judgment, like two tallies, fit,
Adieu strong Odes, and every lofty strain,
The tragick rant, and proud Pindarick vein:
Should tuneful D'Urfey now resign his breath,
The lyrick Muse would scarce survive his death;
But should divine Motteux untimely die,
The gasping Nine would in convulsions lie.
For these bold champions safer arms provide,
And let their pens the double strife decide.

The King consents; and urg'd by publick good,
Wisely retreats, to save his people's blood:
The moving legions leave the dusty plain,
And safe at home poetick wars maintain.

LETTER XLIV.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

Tuesday, March 12th, 1699 [-1700.]

MADAM,

'Tis a week since I receiv'd the favour of a
letter, which I have not yet acknowledg'd to you.

old. In 1695 he had seceded from Drury-Lane, and
opened the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

^a Robert Leake, the third Earl of Scarsdale.

About that time my new Poems were publish'd, which are not come till this day into my hands. They are a debt to you, I must confess; and I am glad, because they are so unworthy to be made a present.³ Your sisters, I hope, will be so kind to have them convey'd to you; that my writings may have the honour of waiting on you, which is deny'd to me. The Town encourages them with more applause than any thing of mine deserves: and particularly my Cousin Driden accepted one from me so very indulgently, that it makes me more and more in love with him. But all our hopes of the House of Commons are wholly dash'd. Our proprieties are destroy'd; and rather than we shou'd not perish, they have made a breach in the MAGNA CHARTA;⁴ for which God forgive them!—Congreve's new play⁵ has had but moderate success, though it deserves much better.—I am neither in health, nor do I want afflictions of any kind; but am in all conditions,

Madam,

Your most oblig'd obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

*For Mrs. Stuart, att Cotterstock
near Oundle, These.*

*By the Oundle Carrier, with
a book directed to her, These.*

Northamptonshyre.

³ Here we have an additional confirmation of a remark already made. See p. 74, n. 4. So also when he speaks of his Virgil to his sons, he says, "it succeeds in the world beyond its desert, or my expectation."

LETTER XLV.

TO MRS. STEWARD.

Thursday, April the 11th, 1700.

MADAM,

THE ladies of the town have infected you at a distance : they are all of your opinion, and like my last book of Poems⁶ better than any thing they have formerly seen of mine. I always thought my Verses to my Cousin Driden were the best of the whole ;⁷ and to my comfort, the Town thinks them so ; and he, which pleases me most, is of the same judgment, as appears by a noble present

⁴ He alludes to the statute, 11 and 12 William III. c. 4. for the further preventing the growth of popery ; by which it was enacted, that from and after the 29th of Sept. 1700, all papists who should not, within six months after attaining the age of eighteen years, take the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, &c. should be incapable of inheriting or taking any lands or tenements, by descent or devise ; and that the next of kin, being a protestant, should enjoy the same.

⁵ THE WAY OF THE WORLD. The author was so disgusted at the ill reception of this comedy, that he determined to write no more for the stage.

⁶ HIS FABLES.

⁷ It should be remembered, that when he speaks of the contents of this volume, and thus highly praises the verses to his kinsman, he had in contemplation only the new pieces which appeared in it. ALEXANDER'S FEAST had

he has sent me,⁸ which surpris'd me, because I did not in the least expect it.—I doubt not but he receiv'd what you were pleas'd to send him ; because he sent me the letter which you did me the favour to write me.—At this very instant I heare the guns ; which, goeing off, give me to understand that the King is goeing to the Parliament, to pass Acts, and consequently to prorogue them : for yesterday I heard that both he and the Lords have given up the cause, and the House of Commons have gain'd an entire victory ;⁹ though, under the

been printed in 1697, in a separate form ; had already “ had its trial, and stood out all appeals.”

⁸ See vol. i. part i. pp. 325 and 327.

⁹ King William had rewarded the Earls of Portland, Galway, Albemarle, and Athlone, and other of his foreign servants, who had served him ably and faithfully, and whom he had raised to peerages, with grants of part of the forfeited estates in Ireland, to enable them to support their new dignities. The House of Commons having resolved to resume those grants, brought in a Bill for that purpose, and to apply them to the payment of the publick debts ; and, to prevent the Bill from being defeated in the House of Lords, they called this Bill, not an Act of Resumption, but a Bill of Supply ; and tacked it to that for the ordinary grants of the year. The Lords for some time opposed—not the resumption, but the form of the Bill, which tended to reduce them to insignificance : but at length, on an intimation from his Majesty,—that he did not wish any further opposition to be made, even the Servants of the Crown gave way ; and the Bill passed both Houses.—The day before this letter was written, the Commons, not content with having deprived their

rose, I am of opinion that much of the confidence is abated on either side, and that whensoever they meet next, it will give that house a farther occasion of encroaching on the prerogative and the Lords; for they who beare the purse, will rule. The Parliament being risen, my Cousin Driden will immediately be with you, and, I believe, return his thanks in person.—All this while I am lame at home, and have not stirr'd abroad this moneth at least. Neither my wife nor Charles are well, but have intrusted their service in my hand. I humbly add my own to the unwilling High Sheriff,* and wish him fairly at an end of his trouble.

The latter end of last week, I had the honour of a visite from my Cousine, your mother, and my Cousine Dorothy, with which I was much comforted.—Within this moneth there will be play'd for my profit, an old play of Fletcher's, call'd THE PILGRIM, corrected by my good friend, Mr. Vanbrook ;¹ to which I have added a new Masque,

Deliverer of his faithful Dutch Guards, and wishing to mark their hatred of all those for whom he had any personal regard, had resolved to address him, that no person, *not a native of his dominions*, except Prince George of Denmark, should be admitted to his councils either in England or Ireland.—To prevent this address being presented, on the 11th of April he went suddenly to the House of Lords; and, to mark his disgust the more strongly, after having given his assent to the Act of Resumption, and some other Bills, he prorogued the Parliament, without making a speech from the throne.

* Mr. Steward. See p. 105.

¹ The orthography of Vanbrugh's name was for some

and am to write² a new Prologue and Epilogue. Southern's tragedy, call'd the REVOLT OF CAPUA, will be play'd at Betterton's House within this fortnight. I am out with that Company; and therefore, if I can help it, will not read it before 'tis acted, though the authour much desires I shou'd.—Do not think I will refuse a present from fair hands; for I am resolv'd to save my bacon.³ I beg your pardon for this slovenly letter;⁴ but I have not health to transcribe it. My service to my Cousin, your brother, who I heare is happy in your company; which he is not, who most desires it, and who is, Madam,

Your most oblig'd obedient

Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

For Mrs. Stuart,

*Att Cotterstock, neare Oundle,
in Northamptonshyre, These.*

To be left with the

Postmaster of Oundle.

time unsettled. It is thus spelled in the fifth volume of Dryden's MISCELLANIES published in 1704, after his death.—Gildon says, that Dryden had publickly *panegyrick'd* Vanbrugh; but I know not to what he alludes.

² Our author died on the first of the following month, after an illness of four or five days: these last spirited productions of his pen, therefore, were written between the 11th and 26th of April, perhaps not a fortnight before his death.

³ See Letter xxix. p. 73.

⁴ The paper was blotted with ink in several places, and otherwise soiled.

ADDITIONS AND EMENDATIONS.

IN THE LIFE OF DRYDEN.

P. 3. n. l. 4. from the bottom.

In the year 1679, and for some time afterwards, our author wrote his name DREYDEN; as we find from the London Gazette, No. 1472, (see p. 322, n. 7.) and from the titlepage of the second edition of his ESSAY OF DRAMATICK POESY, in 1684. So also one of his contemporaries, in a paper of Verses prefixed to NOAH'S FLOOD, an opera, 1679:

"Thou fear'st no cynical philosopher,
"No nigrum ☉, nor an English R;
"No, nor thou need'st not; for we plainly see
"In every individual line of thee,
"Milton and *Dreyden* in epitome."

It should seem to have been the ancient name of his family. See vol. i. part i. p. 554. n.

P. 6. n. l. 13. For *Dryden's*, r. *Dryden*.

Ibid. n. l. 4. from the bottom. From the inaccuracy of the person whom I employed to transcribe the inscription on Dryden's monument, the words here are not rightly arranged, though in other respects the inscription is correctly given. They should have been arranged thus:

"J. D R Y D E N,
"Natus 1632. Mortuus Maij 1. 1700." &c.

P. 10. l. 16. For *Burnet*, r. *Oldmixon*.

Ibid. n. 3. l. 2. This pamphlet, which was published anonymously, I now believe, was written, not by Thomas Burnet, but by John Oldmixon.

P. 12. l. 17. *Read*—leaving two daughters; Elizabeth the wife of Dr. Richard Martyn, Prebendary of Westminster, and Mary, who was married to John Shaw, Esq.

P. 16. l. 5. For *Dryden*, r. *Dreyden*.

Ibid. l. 12. *Dele* the marks of a word omitted; and for *table*, r. *tables*.

An inaccurate transcript of this order, which was transmitted to me from Cambridge, was the occasion of this error; which I have been enabled to correct by the kindness of the Rev. Dr. Mansel, Master of Trinity College in Cambridge, to whom I am also indebted for the notice relative to Dr. Lockier's admission into that college, given in p. 481. n.

The words—"the three *Fellowes tables*," that is, the three tables of the Fellows, refer, as the same gentleman observes to me, to a table formerly in use at Trinity College, viz. the Bursar's, which has for some time been laid aside; two tables only (the Vice-Master's and the Dean's) being now occupied.

To Dr. Mansel I am also indebted for the following notice, which has been lately discovered in one of the old books of his College:

"April 23, 1655. At the election of Scholars, Wilford is chosen into Sir Dreyden's place."

This entry induces me to believe, that our author left the University a year earlier than I have supposed. There are instances, however, of gownsmen residing at Cambridge after the loss of their scholarships.

P. 17. l. 8. As I was sure from the recital in our author's patent, that he was a Master of Arts, I had reason to believe that he had obtained that degree at Cambridge, at the regular time, though his name was omitted to be enrolled with those who were thus honoured in 1657. Still, however, entertaining doubts on this subject, I continued my researches after the page here referred to was printed; and at length discovered that Dryden's

degree of M. A. was conferred by Archbishop Sheldon, several years afterwards. See the Dispensation granted on that occasion, in the Appendix to vol. i. part i.

P. 554.

P. 28. n. 4. l. 5. For *a*, r. *an*.

P. 74. l. 11, from the bottom. *Dele* the words—*and three quarters*.

P. 81. l. 9. After the word *sense*, add ”.

P. 92. n. 9. *Dele* the words—in the *Appendix*.

P. 101. n. l. 13. For *rogue*, r. *dog*.

P. 103. n. 5. This lady has been represented as the person whom Pope had in view in the second of the following lines,—ON THE USE OF RICHES :

“ But thousands die, without or this or that,

“ Die, and endow a college, *or a cat*.”

Sir David Dalrymple, (Lord Hailes,) being laudably concerned for the honour of his countrywoman, has thus vindicated her from this charge, in a note on a curious work, entitled “ The Opinions of Sarah, Duchess Dowager of Marlborough,” selected from her Grace’s original papers, and printed in 1788 : “ Mr. Pope had the art of laying hold on detached circumstances, and of applying them to his purpose, without much regard for historical accuracy. Thus, to his hemistick—‘ endow a college, or a cat,’ he adds this note;—‘ That a Duchess of Richmond left annuities to her cats.’ The lady, as to whom he seems so uncertain, was *la belle Stuart* of the Comte de Grammont. *She left annuities to certain female friends, with the burden of maintaining some of her cats*; a delicate way of providing for poor, and probably proud, gentlewomen, without making them feel that they owed their livelihood to her mere liberality.”

Pope’s apparent uncertainty with regard to the person alluded to, appears to have arisen merely from his having

written in his first edition in folio, "*A certain Duchess, in her last will, left considerable annuities and legacies to her cats;*"—and in subsequent editions, when he had caught the name, having inserted it without changing the original structure of the sentence, by printing—" *A certain Duchess of Richmond,*" &c. But on inquiry it turns out, that both the poet and Sir David Dalrymple (who in general was extremely accurate,) were mistaken; the one in supposing any such bequest to have been made, at least by a Duchess of Richmond after the Restoration; and the other, in the motive assigned for this bequest; for I have examined the will of *la belle Stuart*, and not one word does it contain concerning *the maintenance of cats*. The will of Frances Terese, Duchess of Richmond, who was a widow for near thirty years, was made Sept. 24, 1702, and it was proved on the 21st of the following October, six days after her death. (PR. OFF. Herne, qu. 166.) This lady appears not to have forgotten that she had been celebrated for her beauty; for she directed by a codicil to her will, that her "effigies, as well done in wax as could be, and dressed in coronation robes and coronet, should be placed in a case with *clear crown glass* before it, and should be set up in Westminster Abbey," near Lodowick Stuart, the old Duke of Richmond, and Frances, his wife.

Anne Brudenell, Duchess of Richmond, died in Dec. 1722, about ten years before Pope's Epistle was written, and was therefore more likely to have been in his contemplation: but she made no will, dying in her husband's life-time.—It appears, therefore, that the poet too hastily gave credit to a false tale, unless the will of Frances Howard, the widow of Lodowick Stuart, Duke of Richmond, should contain the bequest above mentioned; which is so improbable, that I have not taken the trouble to learn whether she made a will or not. She died in 1639.

P. 106. l. 14. For *prologue*, r. *some verses*.

- P. 111. l. 2. For *preparatory*, r. *preparatively*.
- P. 135. l. 7, and in n. 9. For *Querouaille*, r. *Queroualle*.
- P. 180. n. l. 1. For—*in this volume*, r. in vol. i. part ii.
- P. 181. l. 5. As in this critical age we must *speak by the card*, it may be proper here to add to this passage, (which was printed several months ago,) that I do not mean to say that Mr. Dyer was the sole author, but the principal author, of the work alluded to. I have good reason to believe that he had at least one, perhaps two co-adjutors : but his co-adjutor most assuredly was *not* a young Irishman, who has been lately suggested as the writer of the work alluded to ; an opinion for which the following among other reasons of *equal* weight has been assigned ;—because *he used to carry Junius in his pocket, and was in the habit of repeating to his friends various passages of that work!!!*
- P. 184. n. 3. l. 8. “*About the time* of this event, some pecuniary losses,” &c. The pecuniary losses which are here coupled with the death of Mr. Dyer, happened in Nov. 1769, near *three* years before that event.
- P. 190. l. 4. *Dele* the words—*a second time*. Lord Rochester had before been at the head of the Treasury, but was not made Lord High Treasurer till after the accession of King James II. ; as I have elsewhere stated.
- P. 205. I have, I find, inadvertently omitted to mention in the List of our Author's Works, his translation of the Life of St. Francis Xavier, which should have been introduced here. The Dedication prefixed to that piece is printed in its proper place.

In the Bodleian Catalogue another work is attributed to our author, on very slight grounds : “ An Exposition of the Doctrine of the Catholick Church,” translated from Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, and published at London in 1685. The only authority for attributing this translation to Dryden, should seem to have been the following

note in Bishop Barlow's hand-writing, at the bottom of the titlepage of the copy belonging to the Bodleian Library :

" By Mr. Dryden, then only a poet, now a papist too : may be, he was a papist before, but not known till of late."

This book had belonged to Bishop Barlow, who died in 1691.

P. 207. l. 3. After *offices*, add—and, as he himself has told us, he conscientiously relinquished them.

P. 222. n. 7. *Dele* the words—in this volume.

P. 233. last line of text. *Read*—had been, &c. The word *had* was inadvertently omitted at the press, after this page had been revised for the last time by the author.

P. 235. l. 6. From a Letter of Dryden to Jacob Tonson, it should seem that the translation of Virgil was sent to the press, when only eight books of it were finished. Tonson therefore probably began to print at an earlier period than I have supposed.

P. 236. n. 8. For xvi. r. xv.

P. 258. n. 8. l. 12. For AUTHOLOGIA, r. ANTHOLOGIA.

P. 278. n. l. 3. After *Penseroso*, add—and elsewhere.

P. 280. n. l. 9. For *Daniel*, r. *Henry*. Henry Purcell, however, being then dead, this musick must have been old.

P. 292. l. ult. n. *Read*—which was made, May 26, 1697, and proved Sept. 7, 1698.

P. 297. l. 2. For *is*, r. *are*.

P. 302. n. 6. Jeremiah Clarke also composed the musick of the Prologue to THE WORD IN THE MOON, an Opera by Settle, performed in 1697.

P. 313. l. 2. For—*First* Lord, r. *a* Lord.—See vol. i. part ii. p. 102, n. 6.

P. 318. n. 1. For xxvi. r. xxxiii.

P. 329. l. ult. n. *Read*—died at Chelsea, and was buried there Sept. 9, 1711.

P. 333. When this page was printed some months ago, I little expected that at a subsequent period the palpable

errour of Dryden and Prior, and their contemporaries, respecting the commencement of the century, would be gravely relied on, as adding support to so strange a notion. This, however, has been the case; and, in addition to these authorities, we have been told of the statute for regulating the year, and the correction of the Calendar, enacted in 1751, 24 Geo. II. c. 23; where the following words are found: "For the next *century*, that is, *from the year 1800 to the year 1899, inclusive*, add to the current year," &c. The authority, it must be acknowledged, is weighty, full, and complete; but unfortunately no authority or statute can convince the understanding, that *two and two* do not make *four*, or that *ninety-nine years* do make *one hundred*. All that follows from that statute, is, that Lord Macclesfield, who drew it, was in an *errour*, as Dryden, Prior, and others, had been before him. Addison, however, should seem not to have adopted this strange mistake; for in THE SPECTATOR, No. 72, after having given an account of the EVERLASTING CLUB, he adds,—"*It is said, that towards the close of 1700, being the great year of Jubilee, the Club had it in consideration, whether they should break up, or continue their session; but, after many speeches and debates, it was at length agreed to sit out the other century.*"

- P. 340. n. l. 16. *Read*—and *gratuitously* instructing, &c.
- P. 348. l. 5. *Read*—that far the greater part of, &c.
- P. 349. n. l. 3. For *Philadelpha*, r. *Philadelphia*.
- P. 359. n. l. ult. For *Stewart*, r. *Steward*.
- P. 361. n. 4. l. 2. For *Harveain*, r. *Harveian*.
- P. 388. For—1 *Maii*, r. *Maij* 1.
- P. 419. Add to note 2.—No discredit was in the last age attached to this foolish study. There are several sermons in print, preached before *the learned Society of Astrologers*.
- P. 439. l. 5 from the bottom.—The poem here described,

after it had received Swift's corrections, was published in London in quarto, under the title of "EUGENIO, or Virtuous and Happy Life;" and was inscribed to Mr. Pope. A few days after its publication, May 17, 1737, the author, who was a wine-merchant at Wrexham, killed himself in a very shocking manner.

P. 467. Add to note 1.—To this change, and the subsequent erection of Buckingham-House, Dr. King has alluded in his ART OF COOKERY, written about forty years afterwards (1709):

"The fate of Kings is always in the dark;
 "What Cavalier would know St. James's Park?
 "For Locket's stands, where gardens once did spring,
 "And wild-ducks quack, where grasshoppers did sing:
 "A princely palace on that space does rise,
 "Where Sidley's noble Muse found mulberries."

The princely palace was that built by Sheffield, Duke of Bucks, on the site of Arlington-House, before 1705; for his long letter to the Duke of Shrewsbury, describing his new house, appears to have been written in that year, soon after he resigned the office of Lord Privy Seal.

P. 485. n. 2. l. ult. For 23, r. 21.

P. 488. l. 5. For *visitors*, r. *visitors*.

P. 494. n. 8. In 1699, however, plays seem not to have begun till *five* o'clock. Thus Garth, in THE DISPENSARY, Canto IV. which first appeared in that year:

"Not far from that frequented theatre,
 "Where wand'ring punks each night at *five* repair," &c.

P. 495. n. 9. l. 8. After *Carew*, put a comma.

P. 499. n. *. The Duke of Buckinghamshire used to go almost every day to Marybone Bowling-Green, and frequently stayed there till it was dark; whence in THE TATLER, No. 18, he is described as *living there*, not in St. James's Park.

P. 517. l. 10. For *study*, r. *instruction*.

VOL. I. PART II.

LETTERS.

- P. 24. n. I had supposed the theatre in Dorset Garden to have assumed the name of *The Queen's Theatre*, after the union of the two companies in 1682; but it did not, I believe, take that name till a few months after this letter was written; namely, on the accession of James II. Dryden, therefore, was perfectly correct.
- P. 88. n. 2. l. 2. In some of the impressions, for *two months before*, r. *not long before*.
- P. 90. n. 1. There is here a slight error, in consequence of my having trusted to Beatson's POLITICAL INDEX; which is not always a safe guide. Charles Montague was not First Lord of the Treasury during any part of King William's reign, and was not Chancellor of the Exchequer in October, 1699, having been divested of that office on the 2d of the preceding June; as I have stated in a subsequent page, from an examination in the Chapel of the Rolls. See p. 102. n. 6.
- P. 98. l. 7. For *Sapho*, r. *Sappho*.
- P. 93. l. 9. For *has*, r. *have*. P. 95. l. 8. *Read*—you may see. P. 101. l. 16. *Dele a*. P. 103. l. 3. For *having*, r. *haveing*; and *ibid.* r. *done me*. P. 104. Lett. xli. l. 2. *Dele of*. P. 109. l. 11. *Read*—to be *either*, &c.

VOL. I. PART II.

ESSAYS.

- P. 10. l. 12. *Angli suos*, &c.

I have frequently had, occasion to observe that our author generally quoted from memory. The passage here cited from Barclay's *ICON ANIMORUM*, c. iv. 8vo. 1614, stands thus in the original: "*Anglis ut plurimum gravis animus, et in se velut ad consilium seductus: seipsos, et sua*

gentis mores, ingenia, animos, eximie mirantur: dum salutant, aut scribunt, descendere ad verba imaginariæ servitutis, quæ istorum seculorum blandities invenit, nisi forte externis moribus imbuti, non sustinent." The sentiment expressed by the words which Dryden has added,—"*ceteras nationes despectui habent*,"—is implied in this passage as it stands; but they are not found in any edition of the *ICON ANIMORUM* that I have seen; and I have consulted several. That piece was afterwards very improperly incorporated with his *SATYRICON*, of which it makes the Fourth Part. The *SATYRICON* is mentioned by Dryden in his Preface to Juvenal.

It is a curious circumstance, that Barclay in his *ICON*, which contains a masterly description of the manners of the several nations of Europe in the beginning of the seventeenth century, should have suggested an expedition against the Turkish empire, similar in the most material circumstances to that undertaken in the year 1798 by the French Republick, (particularly in the number of the troops employed,) though it was proposed to be directed against a different part of the Turkish dominions from that which was assailed by the Corsican Mussulman, who now governs France. See *ICON ANIMORUM*, c. ix. I do not however suspect him to have read Barclay's book: he merely followed the plan suggested to the ancient French Government.

P. 26. n. 2. Sir Charles Sidley translated another act.

P. 33. n. 6. l. 3. For 1674, r. 1672; and in the next line, for *Menardine*, (an error in the book here quoted) r. *Menardiere*.

P. 34. n. 1. In the conjecture here stated, I was certainly mistaken, and the error has been already acknowledged. See the *Life of Dryden*, vol. i. part i. p. 62. *CRITES* was unquestionably intended to represent Sir Robert Howard, and *LISIDEIUS*, Sir Charles Sidley.

P. 41. *Dele* the Note, for the reason assigned above.

- P. 61. n. l. 2. For *satirical*, r. *satyrical*.—Our author's inaccuracy here was probably the occasion of Dr. Johnson's falling into the same error, in the Preface to his edition of Shakspeare.
- P. 69. n. 5. l. 2. For *about the year 1630*, r. *in 1625*.
- P. 92. n. *. After *passage*, r. *in his works*.
- P. 96. n. l. 9. For *comedies*, r. *plays*.
- P. 157, l. 3. from the bottom. "*—that excuse . . . which the philosopher made to the Emperour,*" &c.

The philosopher here alluded to was Favorinus; and the Emperour, Adrian. The story, which was originally related by Ælian, is thus told by Bacon, in his 160th Apophthegm, 16mo, 1625. "There was a philosopher that disputed with Adrian, the Emperour, and did it but weakly. One of his friends that had beene by, afterwards said to him, 'Meethinkes, you were not like your selfe last day, in argument with the Emperour: I could have answered better my selfe.' 'Why,' sayd the philosopher, '*would you have mee contend with him that commands thirtie legions?*'"

Our author, by writing—"twenty legions of arts and sciences," in order to accommodate the story to his purpose, has entirely changed the point of it; for Favorinus was not afraid of the *knowledge*, but the *power*, of the Emperour. He might, however, urge Barclay's comment on this anecdote in his defence; who gravely contends, that the philosopher mentioned this circumstance as a proof of Adrian's *science*. See his *ICON ANIMORUM*, c. x. "*Adeo ut non per jocum magis quem ex philosophiæ præcepto, Favorinus scientiam Adriani metitus sit ex magnitudine potestatis. Adrianus imperator famam scientiæ quærebat, et forte in Favorinum philosophum inciderat; qui ab eo lacessitus argumentis, parcius, et ut victus, agebat, quo princeps impunè exultaret. Objurgantibus amicis, quod tam facile cessisset, 'Male,' inquit, 'admonetis: nam cur non doctissimum putem, qui habet*

viginti legiones?'—Hæc non sine argumento philosophus; cum, ex arte tot legionibus moderari, sit altioris scientiæ, quam quicquid exercito et per contemplationem sublato acumine, in scholis deprehendas."

P. 170. l. 6. from the bottom. *A great wit's great work is to refuse*, as my worthy friend, Sir John Berkenhead, has ingeniously expressed it.

See his Verses prefixed to the Comedies, &c. of William Cartwright, 8vo. 1651:

" For thy imperial Muse at once defines
 " Laws, to arraign and brand their weak strong lines;
 " Unmasks the golden verse that frights a page,
 " As when old time brought devils on the stage:—
 " Knew the right mark of things, saw how to choose,
 " (*For the great wit's great work is to refuse,*)
 " And smiled to see, what shouldering there is,
 " To follow Lucan, where he trod amiss."

P. 231. n. l. 9. After *Dublin*, add—and now Lord Bishop of Killalla.

Ibid. l. penult. For *que*, r. *quæ*.

P. 295. n. l. 14. After *in*, r. *or before*.

P. 331. n. 7. l. 3. For *in* 1668 or 1669, r. *in* 1667.

P. 342. n. *. This note was founded on a mistake, occasioned by the Catalogue of the printed books in the Museum, in which an edition of Dryden's *MOCK ASTROLOGER*, of the year 1668, is mentioned. But it proves, on inspection, to have been an inaccuracy of the person by whom that Catalogue was made; for no such edition is in that library. The play called *THE ASTROLOGER*, translated from the French, and published in 1668, which is there, was confounded by him with Dryden's comedy.

P. 354. n. The passage in the Preface to *THE TEMPEST*, which led me to think that it was not exhibited on the stage till after the death of D'Avenant, must yield to

superior evidence. Since this note was written, I have observed, that the Epilogue ascertains its first performance to have been in 1667.

P. 359. n. l. *penult.* For 18th, r. 28th.

P. 365. n. In the country, Lord Rochester lived a blameless life; but he used to say, (as Aubrey tells us,) that "when he came to Brentford, the Devil entered into him, and never left him till he returned to the country again, to Adderbury or Woodstock Park," of which he was Ranger.

P. 371. n. l. *antepenult.* For *in the year, &c.* r. *at the time of his death, Aug. 20, 1701.*

P. 374. l. 5.—"that which one of the ancients called—*eruditam voluptatem.*"

I have not been able to discover the author here referred to. Quintilian, whom Dryden appears to have studied very diligently, has (lib. xi.) *ineruditis voluptatibus* applied to pleasures derived *ex spectaculis, campo, tessera, &c.*

P. 378. Add to the note—Perhaps the fastidious Brisk of Oxford, was Sprat.

P. 383. l. 7 from the bottom.—"what the historian said of a Roman Emperor—"

Otho; whose last words are here cited with a slight variation: "*Alii diutiùs imperium tenuerint; nemo tam fortiter reliquerit.*" Tacit. HIST. ii. 47.

P. 385. n. For *fourteen*, r. *fifteen.*

P. 391. n. For *scarce fifteen*, r. *little more than sixteen.*

P. 420. n. Since this note was written, I have met with the passage here referred to by our author. It is in Montagne's ESSAYS, book i. ch. 39. "There are gathered out of Cicero's writings, and from Plinies . . . , infinite testimonies of a nature beyond measure ambitious. Amongst others, that they openly solicit the historians of their times, not to forget them in their

writings; and fortune, as it were in spight, hath made the vanity of their request to continue, even to our daies, and long since the historians were lost." Florio's translation, 1622.

V O L. II.

P. 16. l. 18. After *choses*, put a comma.

P. 26. l. 19. For *fregore*, r. *frigore*.

P. 27. l. 14. For *nature*, r. *name*.

P. 35. n. When this note was written, I thought our author had more concern in the ESSAY ON SATIRE than I now, on a closer examination, believe he had. See vol. i. part i. p. 130.

P. 83. l. ult.—“and *curse ye Meroz*, would be oftener preached upon, than—*Give to Caesar*,—.”

See the book of JUDGES, v. 23. “*Curse ye Meroz*, said the Angel of the LORD; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.”

“This text,” (says Edmond Hickeringhill, who preached a Sermon on it before the Lord-Mayor and Aldermen of London, May 9, 1680, that made much noise at that time,) “this text, about forty years ago, I have heard, was the common theme in pulpits, and ushered in, as well as promoted, the late bloody civil wars.” Hickeringhill had written an Answer to our author's MEDAL. See the Life of Dryden, p. 164.

P. 84.—he had, as an old historian says of another, *magnas virtutes, nec minora vitia*.

I have in vain endeavoured to trace this passage to any historian. Annibal's character in Livy, (l. xxi. c. 4.) contains these words: “*Has tantas viri virtutes ingentia vitia æquabant*; which I should have suspected were in our author's contemplation, (for he seldom is exact in his quotations,) but that the very words, here introduced, occur in other modern authors. Thus Howel, in his

LETTERS, Book 1. let. 42. says, "To conclude; in Italy there be *virtutes magnæ, nec minora vitia*." So also Sir Thomas Browne, in his *RELIGIO MEDICI*, P. II. § 10. "*Magnæ virtutes, nec minora vitia*, is the poesy of the best natures;"—a poesy, which Dr. Johnson has applied to the style of Browne. The same words also occur in one of the Epistles of Erasmus.

P. 91. n. 9. For *Queen Elizabeth's birth-day*, r. the day of Queen's Elizabeth's accession to the throne.

The following account of this ceremonial is given by Wright, in his "Compendious View of the late Tumults and Troubles," &c. p. 59, 8vo. 1685.

"The effigies of the Pope, in all his *Pontificalibus*, had been for several years past solemnly burnt by the people in the month of November, yearly; but never with so much ceremony as on the 17th of November this year [1679]; it being a day observed by some in memory of Queen Elizabeth. The procession consisted of one personating the dead body of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, carried on a horse, with a bellman to mind the people of his murther; Priests in copes, with a large silver cross; Carmelites and Gray Friars; six Jesuites, and after them the Waits; several Bishops, some in lawn sleeves, others with copes and miters on; then six Cardinals; and after them the Pope on a pageant, with boys and incense pots, and other ceremonious pomp; behind him the Devil's representative. In this manner they marched, about five at night, from Bishopsgate to the Temple Gate at Chancery Lane end, attended with thousands of people; at which appointed station they committed the effigies to the flames of a very extraordinary bonfire, at which time the mock devil departed, and the shew ended."—See also our author's Prologue to Southerne's *LOYAL BROTHER*, 1682.

A very curious and scarce print, representing this ceremonial, is in Mr. Bindley's Collection.

P. 105. Add to the Note—So, in “The Treacherous Anabaptist, or the Dipper Dipt, a new Protestant ballad:”

“O ye Roundheads and Whiggs, for ever be silent,
“Cease to scandalize Tory, and honest *Tantivy*.”

Again, in *Choice Songs*, printed at the end of an Heroick Poem to his Royal Highness the Duke of York on his return from Scotland, by Matthew Taubman, folio, 1682:

“Here’s a health to the King and his lawful successors,
“To honest *Tantivies*, and loyal Addressers;
“But a pox take all those, that promoted Petitions,
“To poison the nation, and stir up seditions.”

P. 134. n. 7. For *Leolin*, r. *Leoline*.—I have lately observed, that Sir John Dalrymple, in his “APPENDIX to the Review of Events after the Restoration,” p. 324, says, that the relation of Shaftesbury’s death here given, was chiefly founded on the testimony of one Massal; and that “if he had known Massal’s character to have been so bad as he afterwards found it to have been, he should not have given credit to any thing said by him.”

P. 151. n. l. 6. For *third*, r. *sixth*.

For a more particular account of the news of the Duke of Monmouth’s landing, reaching London, see the *Life of Dryden*, p. 188. n.

P. 152. n. See vol. iii. p. 32, where our author has given the same definition; but we there find that he meant only what he calls “*poetical wit*.” This qualification in a great measure obviates the objections made by Addison on this subject.

P. 211. l. 13 from the bottom.—*so have you wisely chosen to withdraw yourself from publick business, &c.*

On the 19th of October, 1689, the Marquis of Halifax desired to be excused from officiating any longer as Speaker of the House of Lords; and Sir Robert Atkins, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, was appointed Speaker in his room.

P. 218. n. There is here a slight mistake, in consequence of my trusting to memory. Lord Rochester was in the reign of Charles II. only First Commissioner of the Treasury, and by King James was made Lord High Treasurer, as has been rightly stated in p. 64.—In this note therefore, in l. 3, for *Lord Treasurer*, r. *First Lord of the Treasury*; and afterwards, *dele* the words again, and a second time.

P. 220. n. 1. l. 2. *Read*, James, Earl of Ossory, afterwards the second Duke of Ormond.

Ibid. l. 5. For the *Duchess of Ormond*, r. *Lady Ossory*.

P. 231. l. 12 from the bottom. For *Ptolomy*, r. *Ptolemy*.

P. 237. n. l. 3. For *Charles*, r. *Thomas*.

P. 249. For 1662; r. 1661.

P. 274. n. l. 1. Since this note was written, I have observed that Crowne, in the Preface to his *CALIGULA*, a tragedy, printed in 1698, says, that "*three parts of four of the Notes on THE EMPRESS OF MOROCCO, were written by him.*"

P. 278. l. 5. "I suspect he took her character from the *poisoning woman.*"

Catharine des Hayes, the widow of the Sieur Mont-Voisin, and thence known by the name of LA VOISIN, about this time, having purchased from an Italian chemist named Exili, a poison named *acqua toffana*, with it destroyed many lives. She pretended to the spirit of prophecy, and took care to fulfil her deadly predictions, by giving her drug to those whose death she had foretold. By this flagitious trade she supported herself in great elegance for some years. Being at length suspected, in consequence of various persons having died suddenly, a *chambre ardente* was held at the Arsenal in Paris, by order of Louis the Fourteenth, and she was burned, July 22, 1680.—I doubt, however, whether she was sufficiently notorious, when the Notes on THE EMPRESS OF

MOROCCO were written, to have been here in contemplation.

P. 288. n. See also THE LOYAL SATIRIST, 4to, 1662, p. 7 :

“— among the Turks, dizziness is a divine trance ; changelings and *ideots* are the *chiefest saints* ; and 'tis the greatest sign of revelation to be out of one's wits.”

P. 293. n. 3. See this matter more accurately stated in the Life of Dryden.—Though the story of Absalom and Achitophel had not been applied in the pulpit to this part of King Charles the Second's reign, before our author's poem, Nathaniel Carpenter had exhibited the picture of “ a wicked politician,” in the person of Achitophel, in three sermons preached at Oxford, which were printed in the year 1627. I doubt, however, whether Dryden had ever seen Carpenter's book.

P. 294. n. 6.—The following instances fully support my conjecture here. In Mr. Bindley's Collection is “ A proper New *Brummigham* Ballad, to the tune of—*Hey then, up go we* ;” which is a song of triumph on the prospect of the speedy downfall of the Church of England, and the arrival of the happy time when men shall be allowed to *teach beneath a tree, and make a pulpit of a cart*. So also in “ Old Jemmy, an excellent new ballad,” in the same Collection ; published Sep. 15, 1681 :

“ Old Jemmy is the top
“ And chief among the princes,
“ No *mobile* gay fop,
“ With *Brimingham* pretences.”

Again, in IGNORAMUS, a ballad, Dec. 15, 1681 :

“ O, how they plotted !
“ *Briminghams* voted,
“ And all the *mobile* the holy cause promoted.”

Again, in THE CAVALIER LITANY, Nov. 1682 :

- " From a *Brumisham* Saint, and a serious Church Whig,
- " From a puritan soul that abominates pig,
- " From the forty-one rogues, that would hum the old
gig. *Libera nos."*

Again, in " THE RIDDLE OF THE ROUND-HEAD, an excellent new ballad," Sep. 9, 1681 :

- " Lords and Bishops are useless voted; - -
- " Whigs and *Brumighams*, with *shams* and stories,
- " Are true protestants,
- " And protestants are masquerades and Tories,
- " The modern reformation of the Saints."

See also the Prologue to SIR BARNABY WHIG, a comedy, by T. D'Urfey, 1681 :

- " In a coffee-house just now among the rabble,
- " I humbly ask'd, which was the treason-table ;
- " The fellow pointed, and 'faith down I sat,
- " To hear two harden'd *Brumicham* rascals prate ; - - -
- " Aiming at politicks, though void of reason,
- " And lacing coffee with large lumps of *treason*."

P. 301. n. 5. *Read*—in 1681 and 1682.

Shaftesbury was supposed to be the author of the first part of NO PROTESTANT PLOT.

P. 306. n. l. 11. After *Muse*, add—THE TORY POETS.

P. 307. n. Since this note was written, I have met with THE WHIP AND KEY. Some account of that poem may be found in the Life of Dryden, p. 158.

P. 310. n. Sir George Mackenzie, soon after the Restoration, published RELIGIO STOICI.—In 1685 appeared RELIGIO JURISPRUDENTIS; and in 1691 was published RELIGIO MILITIS.

P. 311. l. 12. " ——— whose writings have highly deserved of both."

I suspect, Tillotson, at that time Dean of Canterbury, was the person here meant. Congreve tells us, that Dryden greatly admired his writings.

P. 407. " — What has been already noted *by* him—."

Such was the phraseology of the last age. Our author means—*of* or *concerning* him.

P. 411. l. 13. " It is not defined, how far our resolution may carry us to suffer. The force of bodies may more easily be determined, than that of souls."

Dr. Johnson, in his 32d RAMBLER, has thus energetically expressed the same sentiment. I do not, however, suppose that he had Montagne in his thoughts :

" I think there is some reason for questioning, whether the body and mind are not so proportioned, that the one can bear all which can be inflicted on the other ; whether virtue cannot stand its ground as long as life, and whether a soul well principled will not be separated before it be subdued."

P. 425. In confirmation of what has been here suggested, (that this Advertisement was written by Dryden,) see vol. iii. p. 388. n.

P. 453. n. The poem alluded to by Fenton, was written by Blackmore, and appeared in 1709, under the title of " Instructions to Vanderbank ; a sequel to the Advice to the Poets." See some extracts from it ridiculed in THE TATLER, No. 3.

P. 476. In further support of what is here stated, see the Life of Dryden, p. 193, n. 9.

P. 532, n. 1. Robin Wisdom's " godly ballad" here alluded to, appeared probably in the 16th century. It is found also at the end of " The whole Book of Psalms collected into English Meter by Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins, and others," subjoined to the Book of

Common Prayer, folio, 1662. The first stanza, to which our author refers, is the only part of it which need be quoted :

“ Preserve us, LORD, by thy dear word,
 “ From *Turk and Pope* defend us, LORD ;
 “ Which both would thrust out of his throne
 “ Our Lord JESUS CHRIST, thy dear son.”

P. 543. n. 7. l. 4. For *Bohurs*, r. *Bouhours*.

VOL. III.

P. 26. n. 7. For 1680, r. 1684 ; and in the next line, r. appeared *also*—.

P. 41. My memory here deceived me ; for it is the *Essay on Satire*, not that on *Poetry*, that Sheffield says, was written in 1675. Dryden therefore, by the words—
 “ before I knew the author of it,” certainly meant,—
 before I knew by whom it was written.

P. 43. n. *Delete* the words—“ *to whom*,” &c. the verses referred to, though generally ascribed to our author, not being written by him. See vol. i. part i. p. 507.

P. 56. l. 15.—“ to give mankind *their own*—.”

Here we have one among many proofs of Dryden's love of English idiomatical phrases. In a serious composition no one would now venture to write—“ *he gave mankind their own*,” in the sense of—“ *he rated them severely*.”

P. 65. n. Dr. Chetwood had a claim to the peerage of Wahull, or Woodhull ; and on this ground, perhaps, was denominated “ a person of honour.”

P. 112. l. 2. For *self-concept*, r. *self-conceit*.

P. 125. l. 5. For *Siquis*, r. *Si quis*.

P. 127. l. 11. from the bottom. For *satirick*, r. *satyrick*.

P. 151. n. The Ancients, it should be recollected, writing on rolls of parchment, called each book or part of a work, or whatever might be comprised within the roll, a *volume*. Thus the fifteen books of Ovid's *METAMORPHOSES* certainly made fifteen volumes, if not more. The works of Varro therefore, though unquestionably voluminous, were not so numerous as may at first sight appear.

P. 194. n. 2. Since this remark was written, I have met with several notices of "honest Mr. Swan," who was the most distinguished punster of his day. Dennis speaks of him more than once in his *Letters*, 1696; and declares, that "for the management of quibbles and dice, no one came near him." Briscoe, the bookseller, in his *Collection of Letters*, calls him—Captain Swan. He is twice mentioned by Swift, who styles him—"the famous Mr. Swan," and says, he was "as virulent a Jacobite as any in England." See Swift's *Works*, vol. x. p. 244; and vol. xiii. p. 78. He is also alluded to in the Prologue to Ravenscroft's *ITALIAN HUSBAND*, a tragedy, 1698:

"With *Swanish* puns you may regale the cit;
"Their *swinish* taste delights in husks of wit."

P. 199. n. l. 2. For "*Generous Enemies*," r. "*Loving Enemies*."

It appears from a letter of Mr. Moyle, published by Hammond, that our author's learned friend, Mr. Lewis Maidwell, published a *Book of Instructions for reading a course of Mathematicks and other literature*.

P. 212. n. 2. l. 4. For 1702, r. 1713.

P. 229. n. 9. For *Sheers*, here and afterwards, r. *Shere*. See vol. i. part i. p. 253, n. 4. He was, however, usually called *Sheeres* by his contemporaries; from the custom

which prevailed very generally in the last century of adding an (s) to the end of proper names.

P. 253. l. 7.—“and *chapters* even his own Aratus on the same head.”

Our author is perhaps singular in the use of this verb, which escaped Dr. Johnson's vigilance. To *chapter*, meaning—“to pronounce a solemn censure,” is deduced with sufficient propriety from one of the senses of the noun, *Chapter*, “the place where delinquents receive discipline and correction.” It may, however, here bear the same signification as if our author had written “—and *lectures* even his own Aratus,” &c.

P. 269. n. 6. For—“son of *Francis*, r. son of *James*.”

P. 276. n. For *our author*, r. *Shadwell*.

P. 278. n. l. 3. For *Blackman*, r. *Blackmore*.

P. 366. n. Since this note was written, I have learned that *a-mocca*, or *a-muck*, (for so the word should be written,) is used in the Malay language, *adverbially*, as one word, and signifies, if we may so write, *killingly*. “He runs *a-muck*,” i. e. he runs with a savage intent to kill whomsoever he meets. Dryden, by placing *Indian* before the word, (“He runs an *Indian* muck at all he meets,) while he recognized its origin, misled Dr. Johnson and others, to suppose it a substantive. T. Brown, in his “Observations on THE HIND AND THE PANTHER,” 1687, is more correct:—“—then he lays about him, as if he were running *a muck*, and had resolved to kill all that he met.” So also Mr. Boyle on Blackmore:

“Let him great Dryden's awful name profane,

“And learned Garth with envious pride disdain;

“Codron's bright genius with vile puns lampoon,

“And *run a-muck* at all the Wits in town.”

P. 378. l. 16.—Aristotle has made the same definition in other terms—

I thought it probable that the passage here in our author's thoughts was in Aristotle's POETICKS; but when this page was printing, I had not leisure to examine it with sufficient care. But the learned and ingenious Mr. Twining, to whom the publick is indebted for an excellent translation and commentary on that work, has discovered the words which Dryden seems to have had in view; ΠΕΡΙ ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΗΣ, p. 24: edit. Tyrwhitt: Τρίτον δὲ ἡ διάνοια· τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ λέγειν δύνασθαι τὰ ἐνόντα καὶ τὰ ἀρματίζοντα."

P. 394. n. 4. l. 5. For *Bucal*, r. *Bucol*.

P. 401. n. *. l. 5. For *was the inventor*, r. *is generally supposed to have been the inventor*. And add, after the word *videatur*, in l. 11., as follows :

The claim of Sannazarius, however, to the invention of this species of Eclogue, may be doubted; for from a line of Ovid (EPIST. EX PONTO. iv. 16.) it should seem that a Roman poet of the Augustan age, had written Piscatory Eclogues, though none of his works has come down to us :

"Tityrus antiquas et erat qui pasceret herbas,

"Aptaque venanti Gratius arma daret.

"*Naiadas* a Satyris caneret FONTANUS amatas,

"Clauderet imparibus verba Capella modis."

P. 427. n. l. penult. r. any *heroick* poem,

P. 427. l. 10 from the bottom. "*Stavo ben*," &c. I have in vain consulted many books of travels into Italy, in order to discover where or when this monumental inscription was set up, and on whom it was written; and merely mention it here, with a view to a further and more successful inquiry. Its having been quoted in the SPECTATOR, No. 25, has made it familiar to English readers: but Addison does not furnish us with the desired information; for he only says, that it is "an

Italian epitaph written on the monument of a Valedudinarian."

P. 452. l. 12. For *Montange's*, r. *Montagne's*.

P. 495. "From whence did he borrow his design of bringing Æneas into Italy?"—Add to the note here.

Aurelius Victor, who wrote in the fourth century, quotes a work then extant, written by A. Posthumius, *De Adventu Æneæ in Italiam*. Posthumius lived a century before Virgil.

P. 516. l. 18. "I doubt not but the adverb, *solum*, is to be understood," &c.

Turnus certainly would not acknowledge, that the menaces of his antagonist had any effect whatsoever on him; and, therefore, *solum* is not admissible. As for the valour of his opponent, there is no question concerning it, that being introduced by our author's false reading of the passage. See p. 514. n.

P. 517. l. ult. *Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri*.

This line is by many supposed to be in Horace; but it is found in the *ASTRONOMICON* of Manilius, lib. iii. v. 39. Our author affixed it as a motto to his *RELIGIO LAICI*.

P. 561. n. 6. Sir William Trumbull's character of Archbishop Dolben, I have since observed, was printed in "the History of Rochester," 1774, and again in the new edition of the *BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA*.

P. 575. n. l. 4. For *about the year 1662*, r. *April 9, 1665*.

P. 612. n. The observation quoted was not made by Catullus, as Dryden supposed, but by Martial, lib. iii. epig. 44:

"Occurrit tibi nemo quod libenter;

"Quod quocunque venis, fuga est, et ingens

"Circa te, Ligurine, solitudo;

"Quid sit, scire cupis? nimis poeta es."

P. 657. n. The circumstance here mentioned, which explains and illustrates some of our author's verses, is ascertained by a letter written by Congreve to Joseph Keally, Esq. a gentleman who resided at Keally-mount, in the county of Kilkenny, in Ireland. In this letter, which appears to have been written, Sep. 28, 1697, (though falsely dated by the publisher, or some person through whose hands it passed, Sep. 1707,) is the following passage :—" My Lord Duke of Ormond, whom I waited on yesterday, *talks of going for Ireland on Monday next.* - - - I believe my Lady, and the good Bishop, [Dr. John Hartstong, Bishop of Ossory, who had been the Duke of Ormond's Chaplain,] will have their books at that time. [Probably Dryden's Virgil.] Tell the good Bishop, I must have very good fortune before I am reconciled to the necessity of my staying in England, at a time when I promised myself the happiness of seeing him at Kilkenny. *I would say somewhat very devout to the Duchess ;* but you are a profane dog, and would spoil it." See LITERARY RELICKS, published by George Monck Berkeley, Esq. 8vo. 1789, p. 352.

ERRATA.

In the Life of Dryden, p. 461, l. 3. For *has*, r. *have*.
P. 464, l. 10. For *Turnbull*, r. *Trumbull*.



PROLEGOMENA
OF

DRAMATICK POESY,

AN ESSAY:

FIRST PRINTED IN QUARTO, IN 1668.

FUNGAR VICE COTIS, ACUTUM,
REDDERE QUÆ FERRUM VALET, EXSORS IPSA SECUNDI.
HOR.

DRAMATICK POESY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.



VOL. I.

PROLEGOMENA.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

TO THE

RIVAL LADIES.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

ROGER, EARL OF ORRERY.*

MY LORD,

THIS worthless present was designed you, long before it was a Play, when it was only a confused mass of thoughts, tumbling over one another in the dark; when the Fancy was yet in its first work, moving the sleeping images of things towards the light, there to be distinguished, and then either

* Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, fifth son of the great Earl of Cork, was born April 25, 1621; and died on the 16th of October, 1679. He is author of eight plays, seven of which were collected and published in two volumes, 8vo. in 1739.

The present Dedication was addressed to him in the year 1664, when the RIVAL LADIES, which was Dryden's second play, was first printed.

In the last paragraph of the DEFENCE OF THE ESSAY ON DRAMATICK POESY, the reader will find the reason of this, and the following piece, being placed here.

chosen or rejected by the judgment : it was yours, my Lord, before I could call it mine. And, I confess, in that first tumult of my thoughts, there appeared a disorderly kind of beauty in some of them, which gave me hope, something worthy my Lord of ORRERY might be drawn from them : but I was then in that eagerness of imagination, which by over-pleasing fanciful men, flatters them into the danger of writing ; so that when I had moulded it to that shape it now bears, I looked with such disgust upon it, that the censures of our severest criticks are charitable to what I thought, and still think, of it myself. 'Tis so far from me to believe this perfect, that I am apt to conclude our best plays are scarcely so ; for the stage being the representation of the world, and the actions in it, how can it be imagined, that the picture of human life can be more exact, than life itself is ? He may be allowed sometimes to err, who undertakes to move so many characters and humours as are requisite in a play, in those narrow channels which are proper to each of them : to conduct his imaginary persons through so many various intrigues and chances, as the labouring audience shall think them lost under every billow ; and then at length to work them so naturally out of their distresses, that when the whole plot is laid open, the spectators may rest satisfied, that every cause was powerful enough to produce the effect it had ; and that the whole chain of them was with such due order linked together, that the first accident would naturally

beget the second, till they all rendered the conclusion necessary.

These difficulties, my Lord, may reasonably excuse the errors of my undertaking; but for this confidence of my Dedication, I have an argument which is too advantageous for me not to publish it to the world: 'tis the kindness your Lordship has continually shown to all my writings. You have been pleased, my Lord, they should sometimes cross the Irish seas, to kiss your hands; which passage (contrary to the experience of others) I have found the least dangerous in the world. Your favour has shone upon me at a remote distance, without the least knowledge of my person; and, like the influence of the heavenly bodies, you have done good, without knowing to whom you did it. 'Tis this virtue in your Lordship, which emboldens me to this attempt: for did I not consider you as my patron, I have little reason to desire you for my judge; and should appear with as much awe before you in the reading, as I had when the full theatre sat upon the action. For who could so severely judge of faults as he, who has given testimony he commits none; your excellent poems having afforded that knowledge of it to the world, that your enemies are ready to upbraid you with it, as a crime for a man of business to write so well. Neither durst I have justified your Lordship in it, if examples of it had not been in the world before you; if Xenophon had not written a romance, and a certain Roman, called Augustus

Cæsar, a tragedy,^a and epigrams. But their writing was the entertainment of their pleasure, yours is only a diversion of your pain. The Muses have seldom employed your thoughts, but when some violent fit of the gout has snatched you from affairs of state: and, like the Priestess of Apollo, you never come to deliver his oracles, but unwillingly and in torment. So that we are obliged to your Lordship's misery for our delight: you treat us with the cruel pleasure of a Turkish triumph, where those who cut and wound their bodies, sing songs of victory as they pass, and divert others with their own sufferings. Other men endure their diseases, your Lordship only can enjoy them. Plotting and writing in this kind, are certainly more troublesome employments than many which signify more, and are of greater moment in the world: The fancy, memory, and judgment are then extended (like so many limbs) upon the rack; all of them reaching with their utmost stress at nature; a thing so almost infinite and boundless, as can never fully be comprehended, but where the images of all things are always present. Yet I wonder not, your Lordship succeeds so well in this attempt: the knowledge of men is your daily practice in the world; to work and bend their stubborn minds, which go not all after the same grain, but each of them so particular a way, that the same common humours, in several persons, must be wrought upon by several means.

^a Entitled AJAX. See Sueton. in Aug. 85.

Thus, my Lord, your sickness is but the imitation of your health; the poet but subordinate to the statesman in you: you still govern men with the same address, and manage business with the same prudence; allowing it here, as in the world, the due increase and growth, till it comes to the just height; and then turning it when it is fully ripe, and Nature calls out, as it were, to be delivered. With this only advantage of ease to you in your poetry, that you have fortune here at your command; with which, wisdom does often unsuccessfully struggle in the world. Here is no chance which you have not foreseen; all your heroes are more than your subjects, they are your creatures; and though they seem to move freely in all the sallies of their passions, yet you make destinies for them which they cannot shun. They are moved, if I may dare to say so, like the rational creatures of the Almighty Poet, who walk at liberty, in their own opinion, because their setters are invincible, when indeed the prison of their will is the more sure for being large; and instead of an absolute power over their actions, they have only a wretched desire of doing that, which they cannot choose but do.

I have dwelt, my Lord, thus long upon your writing, not because you deserve not greater and more noble commendations, but because I am not equally able to express them in other subjects. Like an ill swimmer, I have willingly staid long in my own depth; and though I am eager of performing more, yet am loath to venture out beyond

my knowledge: for beyond your poetry, my Lord, all is ocean to me. To speak of you as a soldier, or a statesman, were only to betray my own ignorance; and I could hope no better success from it, than that miserable rhetorician had, who solemnly declaimed before Hannibal, of the conduct of arms, and the art of war. I can only say in general, that the souls of other men shine out at little crannies; they understand some one thing, perhaps to admiration, while they are darkened on all the other parts: but your Lordship's soul is an entire globe of light, breaking out on every side; and if I have only discovered one beam of it, 'tis not that the light falls unequally, but because the body which receives it, is of unequal parts.

The acknowledgment of which is a fair occasion offered me, to retire from the consideration of your Lordship to that of myself. I here present you, my Lord, with that in print, which you had the goodness not to dislike upon the stage; and account it happy to have met you here in England; it being at best, like small wines, to be drunk out upon the place, and has not body enough to endure the sea. I know not whether I have been so careful of the plot and language as I ought; but for the latter, I have endeavoured to write English, as near as I could distinguish it from the tongue of pedants, and that of affected travellers; only I am sorry, that, speaking so noble a language as we do, we have not a more certain measure of it, as they have in France, where they have an

Academy³ erected for that purpose, and endowed with large privileges by the present king. I wish we might at length leave to borrow words from other nations, which is now a wantonness in us, not a necessity; but so long as some affect to speak them, there will not want others who will have the boldness to write them.

But I fear, lest defending the received words, I shall be accused for following the new way,—I mean, of writing scenes in verse: though, to speak properly, 'tis not so much a new way amongst us, as an old way new revived; for many years before Shakspeare's plays, was the tragedy of Queen Gorboduc⁴ in English verse, written by

³ Some years after this Dedication was written, Lord Roscommon, as Fenton informs us, in imitation of those learned and polite assemblies with which he had been acquainted abroad, formed the plan of a Society for refining our language, and fixing its standard. In this design, he adds, "his great friend Mr. Dryden was his principal assistant."—But the project was not carried into execution. The same scheme was again attempted by Swift, in the beginning of the present century, without success.

⁴ The author means THE TRAGEDIE OF FERREX AND PORREX, written by Thomas Sackville (afterwards Lord Buckhurst, and finally Earl of Dorset) and Thomas Norton, and acted before Queen Elizabeth, Jan. 18th, 1561-2. A spurious edition of this play appeared in 1565, under the title of THE TRAGEDIE OF GORBODUC; and the genuine piece was printed by John Daye, in 8vo. in 1571. The first three acts were written by Norton; the last two by Sackville.

that famous Lord Buckhurst, afterwards Earl of Dorset, and progenitor to that excellent person,¹ who, as he inherits his soul and title, I wish may inherit his good fortune. But supposing our countrymen had not received this writing till of late, shall we oppose ourselves to the most polished and civilized nations of Europe? Shall we with the same singularity oppose the world in this, as most of us do in pronouncing Latin? or do we desire that the brand which Barclay has (I hope) unjustly laid upon the English, should still continue,—*Angli suos ac sua omnia impense mirantur; cæteras nationes despectui habent.* All the Spanish and Italian tragedies I have yet seen, are writ in rhyme. For the French, I do not name them, because it is the fate of our countrymen to admit little of theirs among us, but the basest of their men, the extravagancies of their fashions, and the frippery of their merchandise. Shakspeare (who

On our author's mistake respecting the sex of Gorboduc, who was king of Britain, and the father of Ferrex and Porrex, Langbaine expatiates with his usual severity.

This play, however, is not written in *rhyme*, which from the context appears to have been meant by the words *English verse*. The greater part of the piece is in blank verse; the choruses in alternate rhymes.

Mr. Pope and Mr. Spence being struck with the merit of this tragedy, the latter gentleman republished it in 1735, with a preface; but unluckily followed a spurious edition of 1590, instead of the genuine copy above mentioned.

¹ Charles, then Lord Buckhurst, who, in 1677, on the death of his father, became Earl of Dorset.

with some errors not to be avoided in that age, had, undoubtedly, a larger soul of poesy than ever any of our nation) was the first, who, to shun the pains of continual rhyming, invented that kind of writing, which we call blank verse,⁶ but the French more properly, *prose mesuré*: into which the English tongue so naturally slides, that in writing prose 'tis hardly to be avoided. And therefore I admire, some men should perpetually stumble in a way so easy; and inverting the order of their words, constantly close their lines with verbs; which though commended sometimes in writing Latin, yet we were whipped at Westminster if we used it twice together. I know some, who, if they were to write in blank verse, Sir, *I ask your pardon*, would think it sounded more heroically to write, Sir, *I your pardon ask*. I should judge him to have little command of English, whom the necessity of a rhyme should force upon this rock, though sometimes it cannot easily be avoided: and indeed this is the only inconvenience with which rhyme can be charged. This is that which makes them say, rhyme is not natural; it being only so, when the poet either makes a vicious choice of words, or places them for rhyme-sake so unnaturally, as no man would in ordinary speaking: but when 'tis so judiciously ordered, that the first word in the verse seems to beget the second, and that the next,

⁶ Our author is here again inaccurate. Many plays before those of Shakspeare exhibit passages in blank verse.

till that becomes the last word in the line, which in the negligence of prose would be so, it must then be granted, rhyme has all the advantages of prose, besides its own. But the excellence and dignity of it were never fully known, till Mr. Waller taught it; he first made writing easily an art; first shewed us to conclude the sense, most commonly in distichs; which in the verse of those before him, runs on for so many lines together, that the reader is out of breath to overtake it. This sweetness of Mr. Waller's lyrick poesy, was afterwards followed in the epick by Sir John Denham, in his COOPER'S-HILL; a poem which your Lordship knows, for the majesty of the style, is, and ever will be, the exact standard of good writing. But if we owe the invention of it to Mr. Waller, we are acknowledging for the noblest use of it to Sir William D'Avenant, who at once brought it upon the stage, and made it perfect, in the SIEGE OF RHODES.⁷

The advantages which rhyme has over blank verse, are so many, that it were lost time to name them. Sir Philip Sydney, in his Defence of Poesy, gives us one, which, in my opinion, is not the least considerable; I mean the help it brings to memory: which rhyme so knits up by the affinity of sounds, that by remembering the last word in one line, we often call to mind both the verses. Then in the quickness of repartees, which in discursive scenes fall very often, it has so parti-

⁷ First acted at the Duke's Theatre in 1662, and printed in 4to. in 1663.

cular a grace, and is so aptly suited to them, that the sudden smartness of the answer, and the sweetness of the rhyme, set off the beauty of each other. But that benefit which I consider most in it, because I have not seldom found it, is, that it bounds and circumscribes the fancy: for imagination in a poet is a faculty so wild and lawless, that, like an high-ranging spaniel, it must have clogs tied to it, lest it outrun the judgment. The great easiness of blank verse renders the poet too luxuriant; he is tempted to say many things which might better be omitted, or at least shut up in fewer words: but when the difficulty of artful rhyming is interposed, where the poet commonly confines his sense to his couplet, and must contrive that sense into such words, that the rhyme, shall naturally follow them, not they the rhyme; the fancy then gives leisure to the judgment to come in; which seeing so heavy a tax imposed, is ready to cut off all unnecessary expences. This last consideration has already answered an objection which some have made; that rhyme is only an embroidery of sense, to make that which is ordinary in itself, pass for excellent with less examination. But certainly, that which most regulates the fancy, and gives the judgment its busiest employment, is like to bring forth the richest and clearest thoughts. The poet examines that most which he produceth with the greatest leisure, and which, he knows, must pass the severest test of the audience, because they are aptest to have it ever in their memory; as the

stomach makes the best concoction, when it strictly embraces the nourishment, and takes account of every little particle as it passes through. But as the best medicines may lose their virtue by being ill applied, so is it with verse, if a fit subject be not chosen for it. Neither must the argument alone, but the characters and persons, be great and noble; otherwise (as Scaliger says of Claudian) the poet will be *ignobiliore materia depressus*. The scenes, which, in my opinion, most commend it, are those of argumentation and discourse, on the result of which the doing or not doing some considerable action should depend.

But, my Lord, though I have more to say upon this subject, yet I must remember, 'tis your Lordship to whom I speak; who have much better commended this way by your writing in it, than I can do by writing for it. Where my reasons cannot prevail, I am sure your Lordship's example must. Your rhetorick has gained my cause; at least the greatest part of my design has already succeeded to my wish, which was to interest so noble a person in the quarrel, and withal to testify to the world how happy I esteem myself in the honour of being,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most humble, and most obedient servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

P R E F A C E

T O

SIR ROBERT HOWARD'S PLAYS,

FIRST PRINTED IN FOLIO, IN 1665.

T O T H E R E A D E R.

THERE is none more sensible than I am, how great a charity the most ingenious may need, that expose their private wit to a publick judgment; since the same fancy from whence the thoughts proceed, must probably be kind to its own issue. This renders men no perfecter judges of their own writings, than fathers are of their own children; who find out that wit in them which another discerns not, and see not those errors which are evident to the unconcerned. Nor is this self-kindness more fatal to men in their writings, than in their actions; every man being a greater flatterer to himself than he knows how to be to another: otherwise it were impossible that things of such distant natures should find their own authors so equally kind in their affections to them, and men so different in parts and virtues, should rest equally contented in their own opinions.

This apprehension, added to that greater which I have of my own weakness, may, I hope, incline the reader to believe me, when I assure him that these follies were made publick as much against my inclination as judgment: but being pursued with so many solicitations of Mr. Herringman's,⁸ and having received civilities from him, if it were possible, exceeding his importunities, I at last yielded to prefer that which he believed his interest, before that which I apprehend my own disadvantage: considering withal, that he might pretend it would be a real loss to him, and could be but an imaginary prejudice to me; since things of this nature, though never so excellent, or never so mean, have seldom proved the foundation of men's new-built fortunes, or the ruin of their old; it being the fate of poetry, though of no other good parts, to be wholly separated from interest; and there are few that know me but will easily believe I am not much concerned in an unprofitable reputation. This clear account I have given the reader of this seeming contradiction,—to offer that to the world which I dislike myself; and in all things I have no greater an ambition than to be believed a person that would rather be unkind to myself, than ungrateful to others.

I have made this excuse for myself; I offer none for my writings, but freely leave the reader to condemn that which has received my sentence

⁸ The bookseller by whom Sir Robert Howard's plays were published.

already. Yet I shall presume to say something in the justification of our nation's plays, though not of my own ; since, in my judgment, without being partial to my country, I do really prefer our plays as much before any other nation's, as I do the best of our's before my own.

The manner of the stage-entertainments have differed in all ages ; and as it has encreased in use, it has enlarged itself in business : the general manner of plays among the ancients we find in Seneca's tragedies, for serious subjects, and in Terence and Plautus, for the comical ; in which latter we see some pretences to plots, though certainly short of what we have seen in some of Mr. Jonson's plays ; and for their wit, especially Plautus, I suppose it suited much better in those days than it would do in ours ; for were their plays strictly translated, and presented on our stage, they would hardly bring as many audiences as they have now admirers.

The serious plays were anciently composed of speeches and choruses, where all things are related, but no matter of fact presented on the stage : this pattern the French do at this time nearly follow ; only leaving out the chorus, making up their plays with almost entire and discursive scenes, presenting the business in relations. This way has very much affected some of our nation, who possibly believe well of it, more upon the account that what the French do ought to be a fashion, than upon the reason of the thing.

It is first necessary to consider why, probably, the compositions of the ancients, especially in their serious plays, were after this manner; and it will be found, that the subjects they commonly chose drove them upon the necessity, which were usually the most known stories and fables. Accordingly, Seneca making choice of Medea, Hyppolitus, and Hercules Oetus, it was impossible to shew Medea throwing old mangled Æson into her age-renewing caldron, or to present the scattered limbs of Hyppolitus upon the stage, or shew Hercules burning upon his own funeral pile: and this the judicious Horace clearly speaks of in his *Arte Poetica*, where he says,

—————Non tamen intus
 Digna geri, promes in scenam: multaque tolles
 Ex oculis, quæ mox narret facundia præsens.
 Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet;
 Aut humana palàm coquat exta nefarius Atreus;
 Aut in avem Progne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.
 Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

So that it appears a fault to choose such subjects for the stage, but much greater to affect that method which those subjects enforce; and therefore the French seem much mistaken, who, without the necessity, sometimes commit the error: and this is as plainly decided by the same author in his preceding words:

Aut agitur res in scenis, aut acta refertur:
 Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
 Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ
 Ipse sibi tradit spectator.

By which he directly declares his judgment, that

every thing makes more impression presented than related. Nor, indeed, can any one rationally assert the contrary; for if they affirm otherwise, they do by consequence maintain, that a whole play might be as well related as acted: therefore, whoever chooses a subject that enforces him to relations, is to blame; and he that does it without the necessity of the subject, is much more.

If these premises be granted, it is no partiality to conclude, that our English plays justly challenge the pre-eminence; yet I shall as candidly acknowledge, that our best poets have differed from other nations, (though not so happily,) in usually mingling and interweaving mirth and sadness through the whole course of their plays, Ben Jonson only excepted, who keeps himself entire to one argument. And I confess I am now convinced in my own judgment, that it is most proper to keep the audience in one entire disposition both of concern and attention; for when scenes of so different natures immediately succeed one another, it is probable the audience may not so suddenly recollect themselves, as to start into an enjoyment of the mirth, or into a concern for the sadness. Yet I dispute not but the variety of this world may afford pursuing accidents of such different natures: but yet, though possible in themselves to be, they may not be so proper to be presented; an entire connexion being the natural beauty of all plays, and language the ornament to dress them in; which, in serious subjects, ought to be great and

easy, like a high-born person, that expresses greatness without pride or affectation. The easier dictates of nature ought to flow in Comedy, yet separated from obscenity, there being nothing more impudent than the immodesty of words: wit should be chaste; and those that have it can only write well:

Si modo—————

Scimus inurbanum lepido seponere dicto.

Another way of the ancients, which the French follow, and our stage has now lately practised, is, to write in rhyme; and this is the dispute betwixt many ingenious persons, whether verse in rhyme, or verse without the sound, which may be called *blank* verse, (though a hard expression,) is to be preferred. But take the question largely, and it is never to be decided; but, by right application, I suppose it may; for in the general, they are both proper, that is, one for a play, the other for a poem or copy of verses; a blank verse being as much too low for one, as rhyme is unnatural for the other. A poem being a premeditated form of thoughts upon designed occasions, ought not to be unfurnished of any harmony in words or sound; the other is presented as the present effect of accidents not thought of: so that it is impossible it should be equally proper to both these, unless it were possible that all persons were born so much more than poets, that verses were not to be composed by them, but already made in them. Some may object, that this argument is trivial, because,

whatever is shewed, it is known still to be but a play; but such may as well excuse an ill scene, that is not naturally painted, because they know it is only a scene, and not really a city or country.

But there is yet another thing which makes verse upon the stage appear more unnatural; that is, when a piece of a verse is made up by one that knew not what the other meant to say, and the former verse answered as perfectly in sound as the last is supplied in measure; so that the smartness of a reply, which has its beauty by coming from sudden thoughts, seems lost by that which rather looks like a design of two, than the answer of one. It may be said, that rhyme is such a confinement to a quick and luxuriant fancy, that it gives a stop to its speed, till slow judgment comes in to assist it; but this is no argument for the question in hand: for the dispute is not, which way a man may write best in, but which is most proper for the subject he writes upon; and, if this were let pass, the argument is yet unsolved in itself: for he that wants judgment in the liberty of his fancy, may as well shew the defect of it in its confinement: and, to say truth, he that has judgment will avoid the errors, and he that wants it will commit them both. It may be objected, it is improbable that any should speak *extempore* as well as Beaumont and Fletcher makes them, though in blank verse: I do not only acknowledge that, but that it is also improbable any will write so well that way. But if that may be allowed improbable, I believe it

may be concluded impossible that any should speak as good verses in rhyme, as the best poets have writ; and therefore, that which seems nearest to what it intends, is ever to be preferred. Nor is* great thoughts more adorned by verse, than verse unbeautified by mean ones; so that verse seems not only unfit in the best use of it, but much more in the worse, when a servant is called, or a door bid to be shut, in rhyme. Verses (I mean good ones) do in their height of fancy declare the labour that brought them forth, like majesty, that grows with care; and Nature, that made the poet capable, seems to retire, and leave its offers to be made perfect by pains and judgment. Against this I can raise no argument but my Lord of Orrery's writings, in whose verse the greatness of the majesty seems unsullied with the cares, and his inimitable fancy descends to us in such easy expressions, that they seem as if neither had ever been added to the other, but both together flowing from a height; like birds got so high, that use no labouring wings, but only with an easy care preserve a steadiness in motion. But this particular happiness, among those multitudes which that excellent person is owner of, does not convince my reason, but

* This disregard of concord was common in the last age. So again in this preface:—"The *manner* of the stage entertainments *have* differed," &c. and, "The *want* of abilities *are* largely supplied," &c. a species of inaccuracy into which more correct writers than Sir Robert Howard have fallen, when a second noun in the plural number immediately precedes the verb.

employ my wonder : yet I am glad such verse has been written for our stage, since it has so happily exceeded those whom we seemed to imitate. But while I give these arguments against verse, I may seem faulty that I have not only written ill ones, but written any : but, since it was the fashion, I was resolved, as in all indifferent things, not to appear singular, the danger of the vanity being greater than the error ; and therefore I followed it as a fashion, though very far off.

For the Italian plays, I have seen some of them which have been given me as the best ; but they are so inconsiderable, that the particulars of them are not at all worthy to entertain the reader ; but as much as they are short of others in this, they exceed in their other performances on the stage : I mean their Operas ; which, consisting of musick and painting, there is none but will believe it is much harder to equal them in that way, than it is to excel them in the other.

The Spanish plays pretend to more, but, indeed, are not much ; being nothing but so many novels put into acts and scenes, without the least attempt or design of making the reader more concerned than a well-told tale might do ; whereas a poet that endeavours not to heighten the accidents which fortune seems to scatter in a well-knit design, had better have told his tale by a fire-side, than presented it on a stage.

For these times wherein we write, I admire to hear the poets so often cry out upon, and wittily

(as they believe) threaten their judges, since the effects of their mercy has so much exceeded their justice, that others, with me, cannot but remember how many favourable audiences some of our ill plays have had; and when I consider how severe the former age has been to some of the best of Mr. Jonson's never-to-be-equalled comedies, I cannot but wonder why any poet should speak of former times, but rather acknowledge that the want of abilities in this age are largely supplied with the mercies of it. I deny not but there are some who resolve to like nothing; and such, perhaps, are not unwise, since by that general resolution they may be certainly in the right sometimes, which perhaps they would seldom be, if they should venture their understandings in different censures; and being forced to a general liking or disliking, lest they should discover too much their own weakness, it is to be expected they would rather choose to pretend to judgment than good nature, though I wish they could find better ways to shew either.

But I forget myself; not considering, that while I entertain the reader in the entrance with what a good play should be, when he is come beyond the entrance he must be treated with what ill plays are: but in this I resemble the greatest part of the world, that better know how to talk of things than to perform them, and live short of their own discourses.

And now I seem like an eager hunter, that has long pursued a chace after an inconsiderable quarry, and gives over weary, as I do.

DEDICATORY TO THE ESSAY 25

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

TO THE ESSAY ON

DRAMATICK POESY.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES, LORD BUCKHURST.⁹

MY LORD,

As I was lately reviewing my loose papers, amongst the rest I found this Essay, the writing of which, in this rude and indigested manner wherein your lordship now sees it, served as an amusement to me in the country, when the violence of the

⁹ Charles, lord Buckhurst, afterwards frequently distinguished by the appellation of the *witty* earl of Dorset, was the son of Richard, the fifth earl of Dorset, and was born January 24, 1637-8. He survived our author a few years, dying January 29th, 1705-6. He attended the duke of York as a volunteer in the Dutch war, and was in the sea-fight of June 3, 1665, alluded to in the opening of the following Dialogue. On the preceding evening, according to tradition, he wrote the well-known ballad, *To all you ladies now at land, &c.* But Dr. Johnson, with more probability, tells us from the information of John, the fifth earl of Orrery, that he then only re-touched and finished it.

last plague¹ had driven me from the town. Seeing then our theatres shut up, I was engaged in these kind of thoughts with the same delight with which men think upon their absent mistresses. I confess I find many things in this Discourse which I do not now approve; my judgment being not a little altered since the writing of it; but whether for the better or the worse, I know not: neither indeed is it much material, in an essay, where all I have said is problematical. For the way of writing plays in verse, which I have seemed to favour, I have, since that time, laid the practice of it aside, till I have more leisure, because I find it troublesome and slow. But I am no way altered from my opinion of it, at least with any reasons which have opposed it. For your lordship may easily observe, that none are very violent against it, but those who either have not attempted it, or who have succeeded ill in their attempt. It is enough for me to have your lordship's example for my excuse in that little which I have done in it; and I am sure my adversaries can bring no such arguments against verse, as those with which the fourth act of POMPEY² will furnish me in its defence. Yet, my lord, you must suffer me a little to complain

¹ The great plague of 1665.

² The tragedy of Pompey the Great, "translated out of French by certain persons of honour." 4to. 1664.—From Dryden's eulogium it appears, that the fourth act was translated by lord Buckhurst; the first was done by Waller.

of you, that you too soon withdraw from us a contentment, of which we expected the continuance, because you gave it us so early. It is a revolt, without occasion, from your party, where your merits had already raised you to the highest commands, and where you have not the excuse of other men, that you have been ill used, and therefore laid down arms. I know no other quarrel you can have to verse, than that which Spurina³ had to his beauty, when he tore and mangled the features of his face, only because they pleased too well the sight. It was an honour which seemed to wait for you, to lead out a new colony of writers from the mother nation: and upon the first spreading of your ensigns, there had been many in a readiness to have followed so fortunate a leader; if not all, yet the better part of poets:

— *pars, indocili melior grege; mollis et exspes*
Inominata perprimat cubilia.

I am almost of opinion, that we should force you to accept of the command, as sometimes the Prætorian bands have compelled their captains to receive the empire. The court, which is the best and surest judge of writing, has generally allowed⁴ of verse; and in the town it has found favourers of wit and quality. As for your own particular, my lord, you have yet youth,⁵ and time enough to

³ See Valerius Maximus, l. iv. c. 5.

⁴ To *allow* in the last age signified to *approve*.

⁵ Lord Buckhurst was at this time just thirty years old.

give part of them to the divertisement of the publick, before you enter into the serious and more unpleasant business of the world. That which the French poet said of the temple of Love, may be as well applied to the temple of the Muses. The words, as near as I can remember them, were these :

*Le jeune homme à mauvaise grace,
N'ayant pas adoré dans le Temple d'Amour ;
Il faut qu'il entre ; et pour le sage
Si ce n'est pas son vrai sejour,
C'est un gîte sur son passage.*

I leave the words to work their effect upon your lordship in their own language, because no other can so well express the nobleness of the thought; and wish you may be soon called to bear a part in the affairs of the nation, where I know the world expects you, and wonders why you have been so long forgotten; there being no person amongst our young nobility, on whom the eyes of all men are so much bent. But in the mean time, your lordship may imitate the course of Nature, who gives us the flower before the fruit: that I may speak to you in the language of the muses, which I have taken from an excellent poem to the king :

As Nature, when she fruit designs, thinks fit
By beauteous blossoms to proceed to it ;
And while she does accomplish all the spring,
Birds to her secret operations sing.*

* These lines are found in a poem by Sir William D'Avenant, printed in 4to. in 1663, and republished in his works, folio, 1673, p. 268.

I confess I have no greater reason, in addressing this Essay to your lordship, than that it might awaken in you the desire of writing something; in whatever kind it be, which might be an honour to our age and country. And methinks it might have the same effect on you, which Homer tells us the sight of the Greeks and Trojans before the fleet, had on the spirit of Achilles; who, though he had resolved not to engage, yet found a martial warmth to steal upon him at the sight of blows, the sound of trumpets, and the cries of fighting men.

For my own part, if, in treating of this subject, I sometimes dissent from the opinion of better wits, I declare it is not so much to combat their opinions, as to defend my own, which were first made publick.⁶ Sometimes, like a scholar in a fencing-school, I put forth myself, and shew my own ill play, on purpose to be better taught. Sometimes I stand desperately to my arms, like the foot when deserted by their horse; not in hope to overcome, but only to yield on more honourable terms. And yet, my lord, this war of opinions, you well know, has fallen out among the writers of all ages, and sometimes betwixt friends. Only it has been prosecuted by some, like pedants, with violence of words, and managed by others like gentlemen, with candour and civility. Even Tully had a controversy with his dear Atticus; and in one of his

⁶ In the Dedication to THE RIVAL LADIES.

Dialogues, makes him sustain the part of an enemy in philosophy, who, in his letters, is his confident of state, and made privy to the most weighty affairs of the Roman senate. And the same respect which was paid by Tully to Atticus, we find returned to him afterwards by Cæsar on a like occasion, who answering his book in praise of Cato, made it not so much his business to condemn Cato, as to praise Cicero.

But that I may decline some part of the encounter with my adversaries, whom I am neither willing to combat, nor well able to resist; I will give your lordship the relation of a dispute betwixt some of our wits on the same subject, in which they did not only speak of plays in verse, but mingled, in the freedom of discourse, some things of the ancient, many of the modern, ways of writing; comparing those with these, and the wits of our nation with those of others: it is true, they differed in their opinions, as it is probable they would: neither do I take upon me to reconcile, but to relate them; and that as Tacitus professes of himself, *sine studio partium, aut irâ*, without passion or interest; leaving your lordship to decide it in favour of which part you shall judge most reasonable, and withal, to pardon the many errors of

Your Lordship's

Most obedient humble servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

TO THE READER.

THE drift of the ensuing discourse was chiefly to vindicate the honour of our English writers, from the censure of those who unjustly prefer the French before them. This I intimate, lest any should think me so exceeding vain,⁷ as to teach others an art which they understand much better than myself. But if this incorrect Essay, written in the country without the help of books or advice of friends, shall find any acceptance in the world, I promise to myself a better success of the Second Part, wherein I shall more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the English poets, who have written either in this, the epick, or the lyrick way.

⁷ Of the use of adjectives as adverbs, I have given several instances in the Notes on Shakspeare's works. From the present, and various other examples that might be produced, it is evident that his anomalies were the language not only of his own, but a subsequent period; and were not errors of the press, as has been frequently maintained in the edition of 1793, whenever they happened to stand in the way of any hypothesis of the editor.

AN ESSAY
OF
DRAMATICK POESY.⁶

IT was that memorable day,⁷ in the first summer of the late war, when our navy engaged the Dutch; a day wherein the two most mighty and best appointed fleets which any age had ever seen, disputed the command of the greater half of the globe, the commerce of nations, and the riches of the universe: while these vast floating bodies, on either side, moved against each other in parallel lines, and our countrymen, under the happy conduct of his royal highness,⁸ went breaking, by little and little, into the line of the enemies; the noise of the cannon from both navies reached our

⁶ Martin Clifford, in his *Letters on Dryden's Poems*, which, though first published in 4to. in 1687, appear to have been written in 1674, says, that this Essay was "stollen from Mons. Hedelin, Menardine, and Corneille." To the latter writer our author frequently acknowledges his obligations.

Lord Bolingbroke, however, told Mr. Spence, as he informs us in his *ANECDOTES*, that Dryden assured him, he was more indebted to the Spanish Criticks, than to the writers of any other nation.

⁷ June 3, 1665.

⁸ James, duke of York, afterwards James II.

ears about the city,⁹ so that all men being alarmed with it, and in a dreadful suspence of the event, which they knew was then deciding, every one went following the sound as his fancy led him; and leaving the town almost empty, some took towards the park, some cross the river, others down it; all seeking the noise in the depth of silence.

Amongst the rest, it was the fortune of Eugenius, Crites, Lisideius, and Neander, to be in company together; three of them persons whom their wit and quality have made known to all the town;¹ and whom I have chose to hide under these borrowed names, that they may not suffer by so ill a relation as I am going to make of their discourse.

Taking then a barge, which a servant of Lisideius had provided for them, they made haste to shoot the bridge, and left behind them that great fall of waters which hindered them from hearing

⁹ The engagement between the English and Dutch fleets took place about eight leagues to the east of Leostoff, in Suffolk. In this memorable battle, eighteen large Dutch ships were taken, and fourteen others were destroyed; Opdam, the Dutch admiral, who engaged the duke of York, was blown up beside him, and he and all his crew perished.

¹ The person hid under the feigned name of EUGENIUS, as we shall presently find, was Charles, earl of Dorset. CRITES and LISIDEIUS, perhaps, were meant to represent Wentworth, earl of Roscommon, and John Sheffield, earl of Mulgrave, afterwards duke of Bucks and Normanby. Under the character of NEANDER, who in the latter part of this Essay appears as a strenuous advocate for rhyming tragedies, our author himself, I conceive, is shadowed.

what they desired : after which, having disengaged themselves from many vessels which rode at anchor in the Thames, and almost blocked up the passage towards Greenwich, they ordered the watermen to let fall their oars more gently ; and then, every one favouring his own curiosity with a strict silence, it was not long ere they perceived the air to break about them like the noise of distant thunder, or of swallows in a chimney : those little undulations of sound, though almost vanishing before they reached them, yet still seeming to retain somewhat of their first horror, which they had betwixt the fleets. After they had attentively listened till such time as the sound by little and little went from them, Eugenius, lifting up his head, and taking notice of it, was the first who congratulated to the rest that happy omen of our nation's victory : adding, that we had but this to desire in confirmation of it, that we might hear no more of that noise, which was now leaving the English coast. When the rest had concurred in the same opinion, Crites, a person of a sharp judgment, and somewhat too delicate a taste in wit, which the world have mistaken in him for ill-nature,² said, smiling

² Prior, who probably was well informed, in the dedication of his Poems to Lionel, earl of Dorset and Middlesex, tells us, that by EUGENIUS in this Essay, Dryden meant Charles, earl of Dorset, to whom it is addressed.—The passage before us, were we not to submit to this authority, would rather lead us to suppose that CRITES was intended to represent that nobleman :—

“ The best good man, with the worst-natured muse.”

to us, that if the concernment of this battle had not been so exceeding great, he could scarce have wished the victory at the price he knew he must pay for it, in being subject to the reading and hearing of so many ill verses as he was sure would be made on that subject. Adding, that no argument could scape some of those eternal rhymers, who watch a battle with more diligence than the ravens and birds of prey; and the worst of them surest to be first in upon the quarry: while the better able, either out of modesty writ not at all, or set that due value upon their poems, as to let them be often desired and long expected. There are some of those impertinent people of whom you speak, answered Lisodeius, who to my knowledge are already so provided, either way, that they can produce not only a panegyrick upon the victory, but, if need be, a funeral elegy on the duke; wherein, after they have crowned his valour with many laurels, they will at last deplore the odds under which he fell, concluding that his courage deserved a better destiny. All the company smiled at the concept of Lisodeius; but Crites, more eager than before, began to make particular exceptions against some writers, and said, the publick magistrate ought to send betimes to forbid them; and that it concerned the peace and quiet of all honest people, that ill poets should be as well silenced as seditious preachers. In my opinion, replied Eugenius, you pursue your point too far; for as to my own particular, I am so great a lover of poesy, that I could wish them all rewarded, who

attempt but to do well ; at least, I would not have them worse used than one of their brethren was by Sylla the Dictator :—*Quem in concione vidimus*, (says Tully,) *cum ei libellum malus poeta de populo subjecisset, quod epigramma in eum fecisset tantummodo alternis versibus longiusculis, statim ex iis rebus quas tunc vendebat jubere ei præmium tribui, sub ea conditione ne quid postea scriberet*. I could wish with all my heart, replied Crites, that many whom we know were as bountifully thanked upon the same condition,—that they would never trouble us again. For amongst others, I have a mortal apprehension of two poets,³ whom this victory, with the help of both her wings, will never be able to escape. 'Tis easy to guess whom you intend, said Lisideius ; and without naming them, I ask you, if one of them does not perpetually pay us with clenches upon words, and a certain clownish kind of raillery ? if now and then he does not offer at a catachresis or Cleivelandism, wresting and torturing a word into another meaning : in fine, if he be not one of those whom the French would call *un mauvais buffon* ; one who is so much a well-willer to the satire, that he intends at least to spare no man ; and though he cannot strike a blow to hurt any, yet he ought

³ Perhaps the writer first alluded to was Dr. Robert Wild, author of *ITER BOREALE*, a panegyrick on General Monck, published in April, 1660, and often re-printed ; which may be the *famous poem* alluded to in p. 39. His works were collected and published in a small volume, in 1668. The other poet may have been Richard Flecknoe. Both these poets celebrated the Dutch defeat.

to be punished for the malice of the action, as our witches are justly hanged, because they think themselves to be such ; and suffer deservedly for believing they did mischief, because they meant it. You have described him, said Crites, so exactly, that I am afraid to come after you with my other extremity of poetry : he is one of those who, having had some advantage of education and converse, knows better than the other what a poet should be, but puts it into practice more unluckily than any man. His style and matter are every where alike : he is the most calm, peaceable writer you ever read : he never disquiets your passions with the least concernment, but still leaves you in as even a temper as he found you ; he is a very leveller in poetry : he creeps along with ten little words in every line,⁴ and helps out his numbers with *For to*, and *Unto*, and all the pretty expletives he can find, till he drags them to the end of another line ; while the sense is left tired half way behind it : he doubly starves all his verses, first for want of thought, and then of expression. His poetry neither has wit in it, nor seems to have it ; like him in Martial :

Pauper videri Cinna vult, et est pauper.

He affects plainness, to cover his want of imagination : when he writes the serious way, the

⁴ This passage evidently furnished Pope with his well-known couplet in the ESSAY ON CRITICISM ;

“ While *expletives* their feeble aid do join,

“ And *ten low words* oft creep in one dull line.”

highest flight of his fancy is some miserable antithesis, or seeming contradiction; and in the comick he is still reaching at some thin conceit, the ghost of a jest, and that too flies before him, never to be caught. These swallows which we see before us on the Thames, are the just resemblance of his wit: you may observe how near the water they stoop, how many proffers they make to dip, and yet how seldom they touch it; and when they do, it is but the surface: they skim over it but to catch a gnat, and then mount into the air and leave it.

Well, gentlemen, said Eugenius, you may speak your pleasure of these authors; but though I and some few more about the town may give you a peaceable hearing, yet assure yourselves, there are multitudes who would think you malicious and them injured: especially him whom you first described. He is the very Withers* of the city: they have bought more editions of his works than would serve to lay under all their pies at the lord mayor's Christmas. When his famous poem first came out in the year 1660, I have seen them reading it in the midst of 'Change time; nay so vehement they were at it, that they lost their bargain by the candles' ends:† but what will you say, if he has been received amongst great persons? I can assure you

* George Wither, a very voluminous poetaster.—
See Wood's *ATH. OXON.* vol. ii. col. 391.

† A sale by *the candle* is one of the modes of selling goods by publick auction.

he is, this day, the envy of one who is lord in the art of quibbling ; and who does not take it well, that any man should intrude so far into his province. All I would wish, replied Crites, is, that they who love his writings, may still admire him, and his fellow poet : *Qui Baviū non odit, &c.* is curse sufficient. And farther, added Lisideius, I believe there is no man who writes well, but would think he had hard measure, if their admirers should praise anything of his : *Nam quos contemnimus, eorum quoque laudes contemnimus.* There are so few who write well in this age, said Crites, that methinks any praises should be welcome ; they neither rise to the dignity of the last age, nor to any of the ancients : and we may cry out of the writers of this time, with more reason than Petronius of his, *Pace vestrā liceat dixisse, primi omnium eloquentiam perdidistis* : you have debauched the true old poetry so far, that Nature, which is the soul of it, is not in any of your writings.

If your quarrel (said Eugenius) to those who now write, be grounded only on your reverence to antiquity, there is no man more ready to adore those great Greeks and Romans than I am : but on the other side, I cannot think so contemptibly of the age in which I live, or so dishonourably of my own country, as not to judge we equal the ancients in most kinds of poesy, and in some surpass them ; neither know I any reason why I may not be as zealous for the reputation of our age, as we find the ancients themselves were in reference to

those who lived before them. For you hear your Horace* saying,

*Indignor quidquam reprehendi, non quia crasse
Compositum, illepidève putetur, sed quia nuper.*

And after :

*Si meliora dies, ut vina, poemata reddit,
Scire velim, pretium chartis quotus arroget annus?*

But I see I am engaging in a wide dispute, where the arguments are not like to reach close on either side ; for poesy is of so large an extent, and so many both of the ancients and moderns have done well in all kinds of it, that in citing one against the other, we shall take up more time this evening than each man's occasions will allow him : therefore I would ask Crites to what part of poesy he would confine his arguments, and whether he would defend the general cause of the ancients against the moderns, or oppose any age of the moderns against this of ours ?

Crites, a little while considering upon this demand, told Eugenius, that if he pleased, he would limit their dispute to Dramatick Poesy ; in which he thought it not difficult to prove, either that the ancients were superior to the moderns, or the last age to this of ours.

Eugenius was somewhat surprised, when he heard Crites make choice of that subject. For aught I see, said he, I have undertaken a harder province than I imagined ; for though I never

* This passage adds some support to my conjecture, that CRITES was intended to represent lord Roscommon.

judged the plays of the Greek or Roman poets comparable to ours, yet, on the other side, those we now see acted come short of many which were written in the last age. But my comfort is, if we are overcome, it will be only by our own countrymen: and if we yield to them in this one part of poesy, we more surpass them in all the other: for in the epick or lyrick way, it will be hard for them to shew us one such amongst them, as we have many now living, or who lately were: they can produce nothing so courtly writ, or which expresses so much the conversation of a gentleman, as Sir John Suckling; nothing so even, sweet, and flowing, as Mr. Waller; nothing so majestick, so correct, as Sir John Denham; nothing so elevated, so copious, and full of spirit, as Mr. Cowley. As for the Italian, French, and Spanish plays, I can make it evident, that those who now write, surpass them; and that the drama is wholly ours.

All of them were thus far of *Eugenius* his⁶ opinion, that the sweetness of English verse was never understood or practised by our fathers; even *Crites* himself did not much oppose it: and every one was willing to acknowledge how much our poesy is improved, by the happiness of some writers yet living; who first taught us to mould our

⁶ This ungrammatical phraseology continued to be used by all our best writers, till the beginning of the present reign. Our author, as *Dr. Lowth*, bishop of London, has clearly shewn, (*Grammar*, p. 31,) ought to have written "*Eugeniusis* opinion."

thoughts into easy and significant words,—to retrench the superfluities of expression,—and to make our rhyme so properly a part of the verse, that it should never mislead the sense, but itself be led and governed by it.

Eugenius was going to continue this discourse, when Lisideius told him that it was necessary, before they proceeded further, to take a standing measure of their controversy; for how was it possible to be decided who wrote the best plays, before we know what a play should be? But, this once agreed on by both parties, each might have recourse to it, either to prove his own advantages, or to discover the failings of his adversary.

He had no sooner said this, but all desired the favour of him to give the definition of a play; and they were the more importunate, because neither Aristotle, nor Horace, nor any other, who had writ of that subject, had ever done it.

Lisideius, after some modest denials, at last confessed he had a rude notion of it; indeed, rather a description than a definition; but which served to guide him in his private thoughts, when he was to make a judgment of what others writ: that he conceived a play ought to be, *A just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject; for the delight and instruction of mankind.*

This definition, though Crites raised a logical objection against it—that it was only *a genere et fine*, and so not altogether perfect, was yet well received by the rest: and after they had given

order to the watermen to turn their barge, and row softly, that they might take the cool of the evening in their return, Crites, being desired by the company to begin, spoke on behalf of the ancients, in this manner :

If confidence presage a victory, Eugenius, in his own opinion, has already triumphed over the ancients : nothing seems more easy to him, than to overcome those whom it is our greatest praise to have imitated well ; for we do not only build upon their foundations, but by their models. Dramatick Poesy had time enough, reckoning from Thespis (who first invented it) to Aristophanes, to be born, to grow up, and to flourish in maturity. It has been observed of arts and sciences, that in one and the same century they have arrived to great perfection ;* and no wonder, since every age has a kind of universal genius, which inclines those that live in it to some particular studies : the work then being pushed on by many hands, must of necessity go forward.

Is it not evident, in these last hundred years (when the study of philosophy has been the business of all the Virtuosi in Christendom) that almost a new nature has been revealed to us ? That more errors of the school have been detected, more useful experiments in philosophy have been made, more noble secrets in opticks, medicine, anatomy, astronomy, discovered, than in all those credulous and doting ages from Aristotle to us ?—so,

* See VELL. PATERC. i. 16, 17.

true it is, that nothing spreads more fast than science, when rightly and generally cultivated.

Add to this, the more than common emulation that was in those times of writing well ; which though it be found in all ages and all persons that pretend to the same reputation, yet poesy being then in more esteem than now it is, had greater honours decreed to the professors of it, and consequently the rivalship was more high between them. They had judges ordained to decide their merit, and prizes to reward it ; and historians have been diligent to record of Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Lycophron, and the rest of them, both who they were that vanquished in these wars of the theatre, and how often they were crowned : while the Asian kings and Grecian commonwealths scarce afforded them a nobler subject than the unmanly luxuries of a debauched court, or giddy intrigues of a factious city :—*Alit æmulation ingenia,* (says Paterculus,) *et nunc invidia, nunc admiratio incitationem accendit* : Emulation is the spur of wit ; and sometimes envy, sometimes admiration, quickens our endeavours.

But now, since the rewards of honour are taken away, that virtuous emulation is turned into direct malice ; yet so slothful, that it contents itself to condemn and cry down others, without attempting to do better : it is a reputation too unprofitable, to take the necessary pains for it ; yet, wishing they had it, that desire is incitement enough to hinder others from it. And this, in short, Eugenius, is the reason why you have now so few good poets,

and so many severe judges. Certainly, to imitate the ancients well, much labour and long study is required ; which pains, I have already shewn, our poets would want encouragement to take, if yet they had ability to go through the work. Those ancients have been faithful imitators and wise observers of that nature which is so torn and ill represented in our plays ; they have handed down to us a perfect resemblance of her ; which we, like ill copiers, neglecting to look on, have rendered monstrous, and disfigured. But, that you may know how much you are indebted to those your masters, and be ashamed to have so ill requited them, I must remember you, that all the rules by which we practise the drama at this day, (either such as relate to the justness and symmetry of the plot ; or the episodical ornaments, such as descriptions, narrations, and other beauties, which are not essential to the play ;) were delivered to us from the observations which Aristotle made, of those poets, who either lived before him, or were his contemporaries. We have added nothing of our own, except we have the confidence to say our wit is better ; of which, none boast in this our age, but such as understand not theirs. Of that book which Aristotle has left us, *περὶ τῆς Ποιητικῆς*, Horace his Art of Poetry is an excellent comment, and, I believe, restores to us that Second Book of his concerning Comedy, which is wanting in him.

Out of these two have been extracted the famous Rules, which the French call *Des Trois Unites*, or, The Three Unities, which ought to be

observed in every regular play; namely, of time, place, and action.

The unity of time they comprehend in twenty-four hours, the compass of a natural day, or as near as it can be contrived; and the reason of it is obvious to every one,—that the time of the feigned action, or fable of the play, should be proportioned as near as can be to the duration of that time in which it is represented: since therefore, all plays are acted on the theatre in a space of time much within the compass of twenty-four hours, that play is to be thought the nearest imitation of nature, whose plot or action is confined within that time. And, by the same rule which concludes this general proportion of time, it follows, that all the parts of it are (as near as may be) to be equally subdivided; namely, that one act take not up the supposed time of half a day, which is out of proportion to the rest; since the other four are then to be straitened within the compass of the remaining half: for it is unnatural that one act, which being spoke or written, is not longer than the rest, should be supposed longer by the audience; it is therefore the poet's duty, to take care that no act should be imagined to exceed the time in which it is represented on the stage; and that the intervals and inequalities of time be supposed to fall out between the acts.

This rule of time, how well it has been observed by the ancients, most of their plays will witness. You see them in their tragedies, (wherein

to follow this rule, is certainly most difficult,) from the very beginning of their plays, falling close into that part of the story which they intend for the action or principal object of it, leaving the former part to be delivered by narration: so that they set the audience, as it were, at the post where the race is to be concluded; and, saving them the tedious expectation of seeing the poet set out and ride the beginning of the course, they suffer you not to behold him, till he is in sight of the goal, and just upon you.

For the second unity, which is that of place, the ancients meant by it, that the scene ought to be continued through the play, in the same place where it was laid in the beginning: for the stage, on which it is represented, being but one and the same place, it is unnatural to conceive it many; and those far distant from one another. I will not deny but, by the variation of painted scenes, the fancy, which in these cases will contribute to its own deceit, may sometimes imagine it several places, with some appearance of probability; yet it still carries the greater likelihood of truth, if those places be supposed so near each other, as in the same town or city; which may all be comprehended under the larger denomination of one place: for a greater distance will bear no proportion to the shortness of time which is allotted, in the acting, to pass from one of them to another. For the observation of this, next to the ancients, the French are to be most commended. They tie themselves

so strictly to the unity of place, that you never see in any of their plays, a scene changed in the middle of an act: if the act begins in a garden, a street, or chamber, 'tis ended in the same place; and that you may know it to be the same, the stage is so supplied with persons, that it is never empty all the time: he who enters second, has business with him who was on before; and before the second quits the stage, a third appears who has business with him. This Corneille calls *la liaison des scenes*, the continuity or joining of the scenes; and 'tis a good mark of a well-contrived play, when all the persons are known to each other, and every one of them has some affairs with all the rest.

As for the third unity, which is that of action, the ancients meant no other by it than what the logicians do by their *finis*, the end or scope of any action; that which is the first in intention, and last in execution. Now the poet is to aim at one great and complete action, to the carrying on of which all things in his play, even the very obstacles, are to be subservient; and the reason of this is as evident as any of the former. For two actions equally laboured and driven on by the writer, would destroy the unity of the poem; it would be no longer one play, but two: not but that there may be many actions in a play, as Ben Jonson has observed in his *DISCOVERIES*; but they must be all subservient to the great one, which our language happily expresses in the name of under-plots: such as in Terence's *EUNUCH* is the difference and re-

concilement of Thais and Phædria, which is not the chief business of the play, but promotes the marriage of Chærea and Chremes's sister, principally intended by the poet. There ought to be but one action, says Corneille, that is, one complete action, which leaves the mind of the audience in a full repose; but this cannot be brought to pass but by many other imperfect actions, which conduce to it, and hold the audience in a delightful suspense of what will be.

If by these rules (to omit many other drawn from the precepts and practice of the ancients) we should judge our modern plays, 'tis probable that few of them would endure the trial: that which should be the business of a day, takes up in some of them an age; instead of one action, they are the epitomes of a man's life; and for one spot of ground, which the stage should represent, we are sometimes in more countries than the map can shew us.

But if we allow the Ancients to have contrived well, we must acknowledge them to have written better. Questionless we are deprived of a great stock of wit in the loss of Menander among the Greek poets, and of Cæcilius, Affranus and Varius, among the Romans: we may guess at Menander's excellency by the plays of Terence, who translated some of his; and yet wanted so much of him, that he was called by C. Cæsar the half-Menander; and may judge of Varius, by the testimonies of Horace, Martial, and Velleius Paterculus. 'Tis probable that these, could they be recovered, would

decide the controversy; but so long as Aristophanes and Plautus are extant, while the tragedies of Euripides, Sophocles, and Seneca, are in our hands, I can never see one of those plays which are now written, but it increases my admiration of the ancients. And yet I must acknowledge further, that to admire them as we ought, we should understand them better than we do. Doubtless many things appear flat to us, the wit of which depended on some custom or story, which never came to our knowledge; or perhaps on some criticism in their language, which being so long dead, and only remaining in their books, 'tis not possible they should make us understand perfectly. To read Macrobius, explaining the propriety and elegance of many words in Virgil, which I had before passed over without consideration, as common things, is enough to assure me that I ought to think the same of Terence; and that in the purity of his style (which Tully so much valued that he ever carried his works about him) there is yet left in him great room for admiration, if I knew but where to place it. In the mean time I must desire you to take notice, that the greatest man of the last age, Ben Jonson, was willing to give place to them in all things: he was not only a professed imitator of Horace, but a learned plagiary of all the others; you track him every where in their snow: if Horace, Lucan, Petronius Arbiter, Seneca, and Juvenal, had their own from him, there are few serious thoughts which are new in him: you will pardon me, therefore, if I presume he loved their fashion,

when he wore their cloaths.' But since I have otherwise a great veneration for him, and you, Eugenius, prefer him above all other poets,* I will use no farther argument to you than his example: I will produce before you Father Ben, dressed in all the ornaments and colours of the ancients; you will need no other guide to our party, if you follow him; and whether you consider the bad plays of our age, or regard the good plays of the last, both the best and worst of the modern poets will equally instruct you to admire the ancients.

Crites had no sooner left speaking, but Eugenius, who had waited with some impatience for it, thus began:

I have observed in your speech, that the former part of it is convincing as to what the moderns

¹ So again, (as Langbaine has observed,) in our author's Prologue to ALBUMAZAR, which, I find, was revived at the Duke's Theatre in 1668, the year in which this Essay was first published:

" Subtle was got by our Albumazar,

" That Alchemist by this Astrologer;

" Here he was fashion'd; and we may suppose,

" *He liked the fashion well, who wore the cloaths.*"

The thought, if I remember right, is originally Suckling's; but I cannot at present turn to the passage.

Dryden, however, was inaccurate in supposing that the ALCHEMIST was formed on ALBUMAZAR; for the ALCHEMIST was acted and printed in 1610, and ALBUMAZAR did not appear till four years afterwards.

* See a high eulogy on Ben Jonson, by lord Buckhurst, (the Eugenius of this piece,) written about the year 1668, Dryden's MISCEL. v. 123. edit. 1716.

have profited by the rules of the ancients; but in the latter you are careful to conceal how much they have excelled them. We own all the helps we have from them, and want neither veneration nor gratitude, while we acknowledge that, to overcome them, we must make use of the advantages we have received from them: but to these assistances we have joined our own industry; for, had we sat down with a dull imitation of them, we might then have lost somewhat of the old perfection, but never acquired any that was new. We draw not therefore after their lines, but those of nature; and having the life before us, besides the experience of all they knew, it is no wonder if we hit some airs and features which they have missed. I deny not what you urge of arts and sciences, that they have flourished in some ages more than others; but your instance in philosophy makes for me: for if natural causes be more known now than in the time of Aristotle, because more studied, it follows that poesy and other arts may, with the same pains, arrive still nearer to perfection; and, that granted, it will rest for you to prove that they wrought more perfect images of human life than we; which seeing in your discourse you have avoided to make good, it shall now be my task to shew you some part of their defects, and some few excellencies of the moderns. And I think there is none among us can imagine I do it enviously, or with purpose to detract from them; for what interest of fame or profit can the living lose by the reputation of the

dead ? On the other side, it is a great truth which Velleius Paterculus affirms : *Audita visis libentius laudamus ; et præsentia invidia, præterita admiratione prosequimur ; et his nos obrui, illis instrui credimus :* that praise or censure is certainly the most sincere, which unbribed posterity shall give us.

Be pleased then in the first place to take notice, that the Greek poesy, which Crites has affirmed to have arrived to perfection in the reign of the old comedy, was so far from it, that the distinction of it into acts was not known to them ; or if it were, it is yet so darkly delivered to us that we cannot make it out.

All we know of it is, from the singing of their Chorus ; and that too is so uncertain, that in some of their plays we have reason to conjecture they sung more than five times. Aristotle indeed divides the integral parts of a play into four. First, the *Protasis*, or entrance, which gives light only to the characters of the persons, and proceeds very little into any part of the action. Secondly, the *Epitasis*, or working up of the plot ; where the play grows warmer, the design or action of it is drawing on, and you see something promising that it will come to pass. Thirdly, the *Catastasis*, called by the Romans, *Status*, the height and full growth of the play : we may call it properly the counterturn, which destroys that expectation, imbroils the action in new difficulties, and leaves you far distant from that hope in which it found you ; as you may have observed in a violent stream resisted

by a narrow passage,—it runs round to an eddy, and carries back the waters with more swiftness than it brought them on. Lastly, the *Catastrophe*, which the Grecians called λύσις, the French *le dénouement*, and we the discovery, or unravelling of the plot: there you see all things settling again upon their first foundations; and the obstacles which hindered the design or action of the play once removed, it ends with that resemblance of truth and nature, that the audience are satisfied with the conduct of it. Thus this great man delivered to us the image of a play; and I must confess it is so lively, that from thence much light has been derived to the forming it more perfectly into acts and scenes: but what poet first limited to five the number of the acts, I know not; only we see it so firmly established in the time of Horace, that he gives it for a rule in comedy,—*Neu brevior quinto, neu sit productior actu*.* So that you see the Grecians cannot be said to have consummated this art; writing rather by entrances, than by acts, and having rather a general indigested notion of a play, than knowing how and where to bestow the particular graces of it.

But since the Spaniards at this day allow but three acts, which they call *Jornadas*, to a play, and the Italians in many of theirs follow them, when I condemn the ancients, I declare it is not

* Horace's line is,

Neve minor, neu sit quinto productior actu.

altogether because they have not five acts to every play, but because they have not confined themselves to one certain number: it is building an house without a model; and when they succeeded in such undertakings, they ought to have sacrificed to Fortune, not to the Muses.

Next, for the plot, which Aristotle called τὸ μῦθος, and often τῶν πραγμάτων σύνδεσις, and from him the Romans *Fabula*; it has already been judiciously observed by a late writer, that in their tragedies it was only some tale derived from Thebes or Troy, or at least something that happened in those two ages; which was worn so threadbare by the pens of all the epick poets, and even by tradition itself of the talkative Greeklings, (as Ben Jonson calls them,) that before it came upon the stage, it was already known to all the audience: and the people, so soon as ever they heard the name of Oedipus, knew as well as the poet, that he had killed his father by a mistake, and committed incest with his mother, before the play; that they were now to hear of a great plague, an oracle, and the ghost of Laius: so that they sat with a yawning kind of expectation, till he was to come with his eyes pulled out, and speak a hundred or more verses in a tragick tone, in complaint of his misfortunes. But one Oedipus, Hercules, or Medea, had been tolerable: poor people, they escaped not so good cheap; they had still the *chapon bouillé* set before them, till their appetites were cloyed with the same dish, and, the novelty being gone, the

pleasure vanished ; so that one main end of Dramatick Poesy in its definition, which was to cause delight, was of consequence destroyed.

In their comedies, the Romans generally borrowed their plots from the Greek poets ; and theirs was commonly a little girl stolen or wandered from her parents, brought back unknown to the city, there got with child by some lewd young fellow, who, by the help of his servant, cheats his father ; and when her time comes, to cry—*Juno Lucina, fer opem*, one or other sees a little box or cabinet which was carried away with her, and so discovers her to her friends, if some god do not prevent it, by coming down in a machine, and taking the thanks of it to himself.

By the plot you may guess much of the characters of the persons. An old father, who would willingly, before he dies, see his son well married ; his debauched son, kind in his nature to his mistress, but miserably in want of money ; a servant or slave, who has so much wit to strike in with him, and help to dupe his father ; a braggadocio captain, a parasite, and a lady of pleasure.

As for the poor honest maid, on whom the story is built, and who ought to be one of the principal actors in the play, she is commonly a mute in it : she has the breeding of the old Elizabeth way, which was for maids to be seen and not to be heard ; and it is enough you know she is willing to be married, when the fifth act requires it.

These are plots built after the Italian mode of

houses,—you see through them all at once: the characters are indeed the imitations of nature, but so narrow, as if they had imitated only an eye or an hand, and did not dare to venture on the lines of a face, or the proportion of a body.

But in how strait a compass soever they have bounded their plots and characters, we will pass it by, if they have regularly pursued them, and perfectly observed those three unities of time, place, and action; the knowledge of which you say is derived to us from them. But in the first place give me leave to tell you, that the unity of place, however it might be practised by them, was never any of their rules: we neither find it in Aristotle, Horace, or any who have written of it, till in our age the French poets first made it a precept of the stage. The unity of time, even Terence himself, who was the best and most regular of them, has neglected: his *HEAUTONTIMORUMENOS*, or Self-Punisher, takes up visibly two days, says Scaliger; the two first acts concluding the first day, the three last the day ensuing; and Euripides, in tying himself to one day, has committed an absurdity never to be forgiven him; for in one of his tragedies he has made Theseus go from Athens to Thebes, which was about forty English miles, under the walls of it to give battle, and appear victorious in the next act; and yet, from the time of his departure to the return of the Nuntius, who gives the relation of his victory, *Æthra* and the Chorus have but thirty-six verses; which is not for every mile a verse.

The like error is as evident in Terence his EUNUCH, when Laches, the old man, enters by mistake into the house of Thais ; where, betwixt his exit and the entrance of Pythias, who comes to give ample relation of the disorders he has raised within, Parmeno, who was left upon the stage, has not above five lines to speak. *C'est bien employer un temps si court*, says the French poet, who furnished me with one of the observations : and almost all their tragedies will afford us examples of the like nature.

It is true, they have kept the continuity, or, as you called it, *liaison des scenes*, somewhat better : two do not perpetually come in together, talk, and go out together ; and other two succeed them, and do the same throughout the act, which the English call by the name of single scenes ; but the reason is, because they have seldom above two or three scenes, properly so called, in every act ; for it is to be accounted a new scene, not only every time the stage is empty, but every person who enters, though to others, makes it so ; because he introduces a new business. Now the plots of their plays being narrow, and the persons few, one of their acts was written in a less compass than one of our well-wrought scenes ; and yet they are often deficient even in this. To go no further than Terence ; you find in the EUNUCH, Antipho entering single in the midst of the third act, after Chremes and Pythias were gone off : in the same play you have likewise Dorias beginning the fourth act alone ; and after she has made a relation of what was done

at the Soldier's entertainment, (which by the way was very inartificial, because she was presumed to speak directly to the audience, and to acquaint them with what was necessary to be known, but yet should have been so contrived by the poet as to have been told by persons of the drama to one another, and so by them to have come to the knowledge of the people,) she quits the stage, and Phædria enters next, alone likewise: he also gives you an account of himself, and of his returning from the country, in monologue; to which unnatural way of narration Terence is subject in all his plays. In his ADELPHI, or Brothers, Syrus and Demea enter after the scene was broken by the departure of Sostrata, Geta, and Canthara; and indeed you can scarce look into any of his comedies, where you will not presently discover the same interruption.

But as they have failed both in laying of their plots, and in the management, swerving from the rules of their own art by misrepresenting nature to us, in which they have ill satisfied one intention of a play, which was delight; so in the instructive part they have erred worse: instead of punishing vice and rewarding virtue, they have often shewn a prosperous wickedness, and an unhappy piety: they have set before us a bloody image of revenge in Medea, and given her dragons to convey her safe from punishment; a Priam and Astyanax murdered, and Cassandra ravished, and the lust and murder ending in the victory of him who acted them: in short, there is no indecorum in any of

our modern plays, which if I would excuse, I could not shadow with some authority from the ancients.

And one farther note of them let me leave you: tragedies and comedies were not writ then as they are now, promiscuously, by the same person; but he who found his genius bending to the one, never attempted the other way. This is so plain, that I need not instance to you, that Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, never any of them writ a tragedy; *Æschylus*, *Euripides*,^a *Sophocles*, and *Seneca*, never meddled with comedy: the sock and buskin were not worn by the same poet. Having then so much care to excel in one kind, very little is to be pardoned them, if they miscarried in it; and this would lead me to the consideration of their wit, had not *Crites* given me sufficient warning not to be too bold in my judgment of it; because, the languages being dead, and many of the customs and little accidents on which it depended, lost to us, we are not competent judges of it. But though I grant that here and there we may miss the application of a proverb or a custom, yet a thing well said will be wit in all languages; and though it may lose something in the translation, yet to him who reads it in the original, 'tis still the same: he has an idea of its excellency, though it cannot pass from his mind into any other expression or words than those in which he finds it. When

^a Dryden is here not correct. *Euripides* has left us one satirical drama, (somewhat resembling our tragedy,) entitled *THE CYCLOPS*.

Phædria, in the EUNUCH, had a command from his mistress to be absent two days, and encouraging himself to go through with it, said, *Tandem ego non illâ caream, si sit opus, vel totum triduum?*—Parmeno, to mock the softness of his master, lifting up his hands and eyes, cries out, as it were in admiration, *Hui! universum triduum!* the elegance of which *universum*, though it cannot be rendered in our language, yet leaves an impression on our souls. But this happens seldom in him; in Plautus oftener, who is infinitely too bold in his metaphors and coining words, out of which many times his wit is nothing; which questionless was one reason why Horace falls upon him so severely in those verses:

*Sed proavi nostri Plautinos et numeros et
Laudavere sales, nimium patienter utrumque,
Ne dicam stolidè.**

For Horace himself was cautious to obtrude a new word on his readers, and makes custom and common use the best measure of receiving it into our writings:

*Multa renascentur quæ nunc [jam] cecidere, cadentque
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,
Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi.*

The not observing this rule is that which the world has blamed in our satyrist, Cleiveland: to express a thing hard and unnaturally, is his new

* Our author has quoted from memory. The lines are—*At nostri proavi*, &c. and afterwards—*Ne dicam stulte, mirati*.

way of elocution. It is true, no poet but may sometimes use a catachresis : Virgil does it—

Mistaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho—

in his eclogue of Pollio; and in his seventh Æneid,³

——— *mirantur et undæ,*

Miratur nemus, insuetum fulgentia longe

Scuta virum fluvio, pictasque innare carinas.

And Ovid once so modestly, that he asks leave to do it :

——— [*quem,*] *si verbo audacia detur,*

Haud metuum summi dixisse Palatia cæli.

calling the court of Jupiter by the name of Augustus his palace; though in another place he is more bold, where he says,—*et longas visent Capitolia pompas.** But to do this always, and never be able to write a line without it, though it may be admired by some few pedants, will not pass upon those who know that wit is best conveyed to us in the most easy language; and is most to be admired when a great thought comes dressed in words so commonly received, that it is understood by the meanest apprehensions, as the best meat is the most easily digested: but we cannot read a verse of Cleiveland's without making a face at it, as if every word were a pill to swallow: he gives us

³ These lines are in the *eighth* Æneid.

* This remark is unfounded; for the words are—*et longæ visent Capitolia pompæ.* Ovid. MET. l. i. In the preceding quotation, for *verbo*, we should read *verbis*; and for *metuum summi*,—*timeam magni.*

many times a hard nut to break our teeth, without a kernel for our pains. So that there is this difference betwixt his Satires and doctor Donne's; that the one gives us deep thoughts in common language, though rough cadence; the other gives us common thoughts in abstruse words. It is true, in some places his wit is independent of his words, as in that of the rebel Scot:

Had Cain been Scot, God would have chang'd his doom;
Not forc'd him wander, but confin'd him home,

Si sic omnia dixisset! This is wit in all languages: it is like mercury, never to be lost or killed:—and so that other—

For beauty, like white powder, makes no noise,
And yet the silent hypocrite destroys.

You see, the last line is highly metaphorical, but it is so soft and gentle, that it does not shock us as we read it.

But, to return from whence I have digressed, to the consideration of the ancients' writing, and their wit; of which by this time you will grant us in some measure to be fit judges. Though I see many excellent thoughts in Seneca, yet he, of them who had a genius most proper for the stage, was Ovid; he had a way of writing so fit to stir up a pleasing admiration and concernment, which are the objects of a tragedy, and to shew the various movements of a soul combating betwixt two different passions, that, had he lived in our age, or in his own could have writ with our advantages, no

man but must have yielded to him ; and therefore I am confident the *MEDEA* is none of his : for, though I esteem it for the gravity and sententiousness of it, which he himself concludes to be suitable to a tragedy,—*Omne genus scripti gravitate tragædia vincit*,—yet it moves not my soul enough to judge that he, who in the epic way wrote things so near the drama, as the story of Myrrha, of Caunus and Biblis, and the rest, should stir up no more concernment where he most endeavoured it.³ The master-piece of Seneca I hold to be that scene in the *TROADES*, where Ulysses is seeking for Astyanax to kill him : there you see the tenderness of a mother so represented in Andromache, that it raises compassion to a high degree in the reader, and bears the nearest resemblance of any thing in the tragedies of the ancients, to the excellent scenes of passion in Shakspeare, or in Fletcher.—For love-scenes, you will find few among them ; their tragick poets dealt not with that soft passion, but with lust, cruelty, revenge, ambition, and those bloody actions they produced ; which were more capable of raising horror than compassion in an audience : leaving love untouched, whose gentleness would have tempered them ; which is the most frequent of all the passions, and which being the

³ Our author (as Dr. Johnson has observed) “ might have determined this question upon surer evidence ; for it [*Medea*] is quoted by Quintilian as Seneca’s, and the only line which remains of Ovid’s play, for one line is left us, is not found there.”

private concernment of every person, is soothed by viewing its own image in a publick entertainment.

Among their comedies, we find a scene or two of tenderness, and that where you would least expect it, in Plautus; but to speak generally, their lovers say little, when they see each other, but *anima mea, vita mea*; ζῷῃ καὶ ψυχῇ, as the women in Juvenal's time used to cry out in the fury of their kindness. Any sudden gust of passion (as an extasy of love in an unexpected meeting) cannot better be expressed than in a word and a sigh, breaking one another. Nature is dumb on such occasions; and to make her speak, would be to represent her unlike herself. But there are a thousand other concernments of lovers, as jealousies, complaints, contrivances, and the like, where not to open their minds at large to each other, were to be wanting to their own love, and to the expectation of the audience; who watch the movements of their minds, as much as the changes of their fortunes. For the imaging of the first is properly the work of a poet; the latter he borrows from the historian.

Eugenius was proceeding in that part of his discourse, when Crites interrupted him. I see, said he, Eugenius and I are never like to have this question decided betwixt us; for he maintains, the moderns have acquired a new perfection in writing, I can only grant they have altered the mode of it. Homer described his heroes men of great appetites, lovers of beef broiled upon the coals, and good

fellows; contrary to the practice of the French Romances, whose heroes neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, for love. Virgil makes Æneas a bold avower of his own virtues :

Sum pius Æneas, famâ super æthera notus;

which, in the civility of our poets is the character of a fanfaron or Hector: for with us the knight takes occasion to walk out, or sleep, to avoid the vanity of telling his own story, which the trusty 'squire is ever to perform for him. So in their love-scenes, of which Eugenius spoke last, the ancients were more hearty, we more talkative: they writ love as it was then the mode to make it; and I will grant thus much to Eugenius, that perhaps one of their poets, had he lived in our age, *si foret hoc nostrum fato delapsus in ævum*, as Horace says of Lucilius, he had altered many things; not that they were not natural before, but that he might accommodate himself to the age in which he lived. Yet in the mean time, we are not to conclude any thing rashly against those great men, but preserve to them the dignity of masters, and give that honour to their memories,—*quos Libitina sacravit*,—part of which we expect may be paid to us in future times.

This moderation of Crites, as it was pleasing to all the company, so it put an end to that dispute; which, Eugenius, who seemed to have the better of the argument, would urge no farther. But Lisideius, after he had acknowledged himself of

Eugenius his opinion concerning the ancients, yet told him, he had forborne, till his discourse were ended, to ask him why he preferred the English plays above those of other nations? and whether we ought not to submit our stage to the exactness of our next neighbours?

Though, said Eugenius, I am at all times ready to defend the honour of my country against the French, and to maintain, we are as well able to vanquish them with our pens, as our ancestors have been with their swords; yet, if you please, added he, looking upon Neander, I will commit this cause to my friend's management; his opinion of our plays is the same with mine: and besides, there is no reason, that Crites and I, who have now left the stage, should re-enter so suddenly upon it; which is against the laws of comedy.

If the question had been stated, replied Lisideius, who had writ best, the French or English, forty years ago, I should have been of your opinion, and adjudged the honour to our own nation; but since that time, (said he, turning towards Neander,) we have been so long together bad Englishmen, that we had not leisure to be good poets. Beaumont, Fletcher, and Jonson, (who were only capable of bringing us to that degree of perfection which we have,) were just then leaving the world;*

* This is not quite accurate. Beaumont died in 1615, about *fifty* years before the time when this dialogue is supposed to have passed; Fletcher in 1625, forty years

as if in an age of so much horreur, wit, and those milder studies of humanity, had no farther business among us. But the Muses, who ever follow peace, went to plant in another country: it was then, that the great Cardinal of Richelieu began to take them into his protection; and that, by his encouragement, Corneille,^s and some other Frenchmen, reformed their theatre, which before was as much below ours, as it now surpasses it and the rest of Europe. But because Crites in his discourse for the ancients has prevented me, by observing many rules of the stage which the moderns have borrowed from them, I shall only, in short, demand of you, whether you are not convinced that of all nations the French have best observed them? In the unity of time you find them so scrupulous, that it yet remains a dispute among their poets, whether the artificial day of twelve hours, more or less, be not meant by Aristotle, rather than the natural one of twenty-four; and consequently, whether all plays ought not to be reduced into that compass. This I can testify, that in all their dramas writ within these last twenty years and upwards, I have not observed any that have extended the time to thirty hours. In the unity of place they are full as scrupulous; for many of their criticks limit

from the same period, as here rightly stated; and Ben Jonson in 1637, only twenty-eight years from 1665, the supposed era of the dialogue.

^s Pierre Corneille was born in June, 1606, and produced his first play, *MELITE*, about the year 1630.

it to that very spot of ground where the play is supposed to begin ; none of them exceed the compass of the same town or city. The unity of action in all their plays is yet more conspicuous ; for they do not burden them with under-plots, as the English do : which is the reason why many scenes of our tragi-comedies carry on a design that is nothing of kin to the main plot ; and that we see two distinct webs in a play, like those in ill-wrought stuffs ; and two actions, that is, two plays, carried on together, to the confounding of the audience ; who, before they are warm in their concernments for one part, are diverted to another ; and by that means espouse the interest of neither. From hence likewise it arises, that the one half of our actors are not known to the other. They keep their distances, as if they were Mountagues and Capulets, and seldom begin an acquaintance till the last scene of the fifth act, when they are all to meet upon the stage. There is no theatre in the world has any thing so absurd as the English tragi-comedy ; it is a drama of our own invention, and the fashion of it is enough to proclaim it so ; here a course of mirth, there another of sadness and passion, and a third of honour and a duel : thus, in two hours and a half, we run through all the fits of Bedlam. The French affords you as much variety on the same day, but they do it not so unseasonably, or *mal à propos*, as we : our poets present you the play and the farce together ; and

our stages still retain somewhat of the original civility of the Red Bull :⁶

Atque ursum et pugiles media inter carmina poscunt.

The end of tragedies or serious plays, says Aristotle, is to beget admiration, compassion, or concernment ; but are not mirth and compassion things incompatible ? and is it not evident that the poet must of necessity destroy the former by intermingling of the latter ? that is, he must ruin the sole end and object of his tragedy, to introduce somewhat that is forced into it, and is not of the body of it. Would you not think that physician mad, who, having prescribed a purge, should immediately order you to take restringents ?

But to leave our plays, and return to theirs. I have noted one great advantage they have had in the plotting of their tragedies ; that is, they are always grounded upon some known history : according to that of Horace, *Ex noto fictum carmen sequar* ; and in that they have so imitated the ancients, that they have surpassed them. For the ancients, as was observed before, took for the foundation of their plays some poetical fiction, such as under that consideration could move but little concernment in the audience, because they already

⁶ The Red Bull, in St. John's-street, was one of the meanest of our ancient theatres, and was famous for entertainments adapted to the taste of the lower orders of people.

knew the event of it. But the French goes farther:

*Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,
Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.*

He so interweaves truth with probable fiction, that he puts a pleasing fallacy upon us; mends the intrigues of fate, and dispenses with the severity of history, to reward that virtue which has been rendered to us there unfortunate. Sometimes the story has left the success so doubtful, that the writer is free, by the privilege of a poet, to take that which of two or more relations will best suit with his design: as for example, in the death of Cyrus, whom Justin and some others report to have perished in the Scythian war, but Xenophon affirms to have died in his bed of extreme old age. Nay more, when the event is past dispute, even then we are willing to be deceived, and the poet, if he contrives it with appearance of truth, has all the audience of his party; at least during the time his play is acting: so naturally we are kind to virtue, when our own interest is not in question, that we take it up as the general concernment of mankind. On the other side, if you consider the historical plays of Shakspeare, they are rather so many chronicles of kings, or the business many times of thirty or forty years, cramped into a representation of two hours and an half; which is not to imitate or paint nature, but rather to draw her in miniature, to take her in little; to look upon her through the wrong end of a perspective, and

receive her images not only much less, but infinitely more imperfect than the life : this, instead of making a play delightful, renders it ridiculous :

Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

For the spirit of man cannot be satisfied but with truth, or at least verisimilitude ; and a poem is to contain, if not τὰ ἔτυμα, yet ἐν ὁμοίωσιν ὁμοῖα, as one of the Greek poets has expressed it.

Another thing in which the French differ from us and from the Spaniards, is, that they do not embarrass, or cumber themselves with too much plot ; they only represent so much of a story as will constitute one whole and great action sufficient for a play : we, who undertake more, do but multiply adventures ; which, not being produced from one another, as effects from causes, but barely following, constitute many actions in the drama, and consequently make it many plays.

But by pursuing closely one argument, which is not cloyed with many turns, the French have gained more liberty for verse, in which they write : they have leisure to dwell on a subject which deserves it ; and to represent the passions, (which we have acknowledged to be the poet's work,) without being hurried from one thing to another, as we are in the plays of Calderon, which we have seen lately upon our theatres, under the name of Spanish plots. I have taken notice but of one tragedy of ours, whose plot has that uniformity and unity of design in it, which I have commended in

the French ; and that is ROLLO, or rather, under the name of Rollo, the Story of Bassianus and Geta in Herodian : there indeed the plot is neither large nor intricate, but just enough to fill the minds of the audience, not to cloy them. Besides, you see it founded upon the truth of history,—only the time of the action is not reduceable to the strictness of the rules ; and you see in some places a little farce mingled, which is below the dignity of the other parts ; and in this all our poets are extremely peccant : even Ben Jonson himself, in SEJANUS and CATILINE, has given us this olio of a play, this unnatural mixture of comedy and tragedy ; which to me sounds just as ridiculously as the history of David with the merry humours of Goliath. In SEJANUS you may take notice of the scene betwixt Livia and the physician, which is a pleasant satire upon the artificial helps of beauty : in CATILINE you may see the parliament of women ; the little envies of them to one another ; and all that passes betwixt Curio and Fulvia : scenes admirable in their kind, but of an ill mingle with the rest.

But I return again to the French writers, who, as I have said, do not burden themselves too much with plot, which has been reproached to them by an ingenious person⁷ of our nation as a fault ; for he says, they commonly make but one person considerable in a play ; they dwell on him, and his

⁷ Though I have not been negligent in my researches, I have not been able to discover the writer here alluded to.

concernments, while the rest of the persons are only subservient to set him off. If he intends this by it,—that there is one person in the play who is of greater dignity than the rest, he must tax, not only theirs, but those of the ancients, and which he would be loth to do, the best of ours; for it is impossible but that one person must be more conspicuous in it than any other, and consequently the greatest share in the action must devolve on him. We see it so in the management of all affairs; even in the most equal aristocracy, the balance cannot be so justly poised, but some one will be superiour to the rest, either in parts, fortune, interest, or the consideration of some glorious exploit; which will reduce the greatest part of business into his hands.

But, if he would have us to imagine, that in exalting one character the rest of them are neglected, and that all of them have not some share or other in the action of the play, I desire him to produce any of Corneille's tragedies, wherein every person, like so many servants in a well-governed family, has not some employment, and who is not necessary to the carrying on of the plot, or at least to your understanding it.

There are indeed some protatick persons in the ancients, whom they make use of in their plays, either to hear or give the relation: but the French avoid this with great address, making their narrations only to, or by such, who are some way interested in the main design. And now I am

speaking of relations, I cannot take a fitter opportunity to add this in favour of the French, that they often use them with better judgment and more *à propos* than the English do. Not that I commend narrations in general,—but there are two sorts of them; one, of those things which are antecedent to the play, and are related to make the conduct of it more clear to us; but 'tis a fault to choose such subjects for the stage as will force us on that rock, because we see they are seldom listened to by the audience, and that is many times the ruin of the play; for, being once let pass without attention, the audience can never recover themselves to understand the plot: and indeed it is somewhat unreasonable that they should be put to so much trouble, as, that to comprehend what passes in their sight, they must have recourse to what was done, perhaps, ten or twenty years ago.

But there is another sort of relations, that is, of things happening in the action of the play, and supposed to be done behind the scenes; and this is many times both convenient and beautiful: for, by it the French avoid the tumult to which we are subject in England, by representing duels, battles, and the like; which renders our stage too like the theatres where they fight prizes. For what is more ridiculous than to represent an army with a drum and five men behind it; all which, the hero of the other side is to drive in before him; or to see a duel fought, and one slain with two or

three thrusts of the foils, which we know are so blunted, that we might give a man an hour to kill another in good earnest with them.

I have observed that in all our tragedies, the audience cannot forbear laughing when the actors are to die ; it is the most comick part of the whole play. All *passions* may be lively represented on the stage, if to the well-writing of them the actor supplies a good commanded voice, and limbs that move easily, and without stiffness ; but there are many *actions* which can never be imitated to a just height : dying especially is a thing which none but a Roman gladiator could naturally perform on the stage, when he did not imitate or represent, but do it ; and therefore it is better to omit the representation of it.

The words of a good writer, which describe it lively, will make a deeper impression of belief in us than all the actor can insinuate into us, when he seems to fall dead before us ; as a poet in the description of a beautiful garden, or a meadow, will please our imagination more than the place itself can please our sight. When we see death represented, we are convinced it is but fiction ; but when we hear it related, our eyes, the strongest witnesses, are wanting, which might have undeceived us ; and we are all willing to favour the sleight, when the poet does not too grossly impose on us. They therefore who imagine these relations would make no concernment in the audience, are deceived, by confounding them with the other,

which are of things antecedent to the play: those are made often in cold blood, as I may say, to the audience; but these are warmed with our concerns, which were before awakened in the play. What the philosophers say of motion, that, when it is once begun, it continues of itself, and will do so to eternity, without some stop put to it, is clearly true on this occasion: the soul, being already moved with the characters and fortunes of those imaginary persons, continues going of its own accord; and we are no more weary to hear what becomes of them when they are not on the stage, than we are to listen to the news of an absent mistress. But it is objected, that if one part of the play may be related, then why not all? I answer, some parts of the action are more fit to be represented, some to be related. Corneille says judiciously, that the poet is not obliged to expose to view all particular actions which conduce to the principal: he ought to select such of them to be seen, which will appear with the greatest beauty, either by the magnificence of the show, or the vehemence of passions which they produce, or some other charm which they have in them; and let the rest arrive to the audience by narration. It is a great mistake in us to believe the French present no part of the action on the stage: every alteration or crossing of a design, every new-sprung passion, and turn of it, is a part of the action, and much the noblest, except we conceive nothing to be action till the players come to blows; as if the

painting of the hero's mind were not more properly the poet's work than the strength of his body. Nor does this any thing contradict the opinion of Horace, where he tells us,

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.*

For he says immediately after,

*Non tamen intus
Digna geri promes in scenam; multaq; tolles
Ex oculis, quæ mox narret facundia præsens.*

Among which many he recounts some:

*Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet,
Aut in avem Progne mutetur, Cadmus in anguem; &c.*

That is, those actions which by reason of their cruelty will cause aversion in us, or by reason of their impossibility, unbelief, ought either wholly to be avoided by a poet, or only delivered by narration. To which we may have leave to add, such as, to avoid tumult, (as was before hinted,) or to reduce the plot into a more reasonable compass of time, or for defect of beauty in them, are rather to be related than presented to the eye. Examples of all these kinds are frequent, not only among all the ancients, but in the best received of our English poets. We find Ben Jonson using them in his *MAGNETICK LADY*, where one comes out from dinner, and relates the quarrels and disorders of it, to save the undecent appearance of them on the stage, and to abbreviate the story: and this in express imitation of Terence, who had done the

same before him in his *EUNUCH*, where *Pythias* makes the like relation of what had happened within at the Soldier's entertainment. The relations likewise of *Sejanus's* death, and the prodigies before it, are remarkable; the one of which was hid from sight, to avoid the horror and tumult of the representation; the other, to shun the introducing of things impossible to be believed. In that excellent play, *THE KING AND NO KING*, *Fletcher*^{*} goes yet farther; for the whole unravelling of the plot is done by narration in the fifth act, after the manner of the ancients; and it moves great concernment in the audience, though it be only a relation of what was done many years before the play. I could multiply other instances, but these are sufficient to prove that there is no error in choosing a subject which requires this sort of narrations; in the ill management of them, there may.

But I find I have been too long in this discourse, since the French have many other excellencies not common to us; as that you never see any of their plays end with a conversion, or simple change of will, which is the ordinary way which our poets use to end theirs. It shews little art in the conclusion of a dramattick poem, when they who have hindered the felicity during the four acts, desist from it in the fifth, without some powerful cause

^{*} *A KING AND NO KING* is one of the few plays in which *Fletcher* had the aid of *Beaumont*. It was acted at court in 1613, two years before *Beaumont's* death.

to take them off their design ; and though I deny not but such reasons may be found, yet it is a path that is cautiously to be trod, and the poet is to be sure he convinces the audience that the motive is strong enough. As for example, the conversion of the Usurer in *THE SCORNFUL LADY*, seems to me a little forced ; for, being an Usurer, which implies a lover of money to the highest degree of covetousness,—and such the poet has represented him,—the account he gives for the sudden change is, that he has been duped by the wild young fellow ; which in reason might render him more wary another time, and make him punish himself with harder fare and coarser clothes, to get up again what he had lost : but that he should look on it as a judgment, and so repent, we may expect to hear in a sermon, but I should never endure it in a play.

I pass by this ; neither will I insist on the care they take, that no person after his first entrance shall ever appear, but the business which brings him upon the stage shall be evident ; which rule, if observed, must needs render all the events in the play more natural ; for there you see the probability of every accident, in the cause that produced it ; and that which appears chance in the play, will seem so reasonable to you, that you will there find it almost necessary : so that in the exit of the actor you have a clear account of his purpose and design in the next entrance ; (though, if the scene be well wrought, the event will commonly

deceive you ;) for there is nothing so absurd, says Corneille, as for an actor to leave the stage, only because he has no more to say.

I should now speak of the beauty of their rhyme, and the just reason I have to prefer that way of writing in tragedies before ours in blank verse ; but because it is partly received by us, and therefore not altogether peculiar to them, I will say no more of it in relation to their plays. For our own, I doubt not but it will exceedingly beautify them ; and I can see but one reason why it should not generally obtain, that is, because our poets write so ill in it. This indeed may prove a more prevailing argument than all others which are used to destroy it, and therefore I am only troubled when great and judicious poets, and those who are acknowledged such, have writ or spoke against it : as for others, they are to be answered by that one sentence of an ancient author : *—*Sed ut primo ad consequendos eos quos priores ducimus, accendimur, ita ubi aut præteriri, aut æquari eos posse desperavimus, studium cum spe senescit ; quod, scilicet, assequi non potest, sequi desinit ; --- præteritoque eo in quo eminere non possumus, aliquid in quo nitamur, conquirimus.*

Lisideius concluded in this manner ; and Neander, after a little pause, thus answered him :

I shall grant Lisideius, without much dispute, a great part of what he has urged against us ; for I acknowledge that the French contrive their plots more regularly, and observe the laws of comedy,

* Velleius Paterculus, i. 17.

and decorum of the stage, (to speak generally,) with more exactness than the English. Farther, I deny not but he has taxed us justly in some irregularities of ours, which he has mentioned; yet, after all, I am of opinion that neither our faults nor their virtues are considerable enough to place them above us.

For the lively imitation of nature being in the definition of a play, those which best fulfil that law, ought to be esteemed superior to the others. 'Tis true, those beauties of the French poesy are such as will raise perfection higher where it is, but are not sufficient to give it where it is not: they are indeed the beauties of a statue, but not of a man, because not animated with the soul of poesy, which is imitation of humour and passions: and this Lisideius himself, or any other, however biassed to their party, cannot but acknowledge, if he will either compare the humours of our comedies, or the characters of our serious plays, with theirs. He who will look upon theirs which have been written till these last ten years, or thereabouts, will find it an hard matter to pick out two or three passable humours amongst them. Corneille himself, their arch-poet, what has he produced except *THE LIAR*, and you know how it was cried up in France; but when it came upon the English stage, though well translated, and that part of Dorant acted to so much advantage* as I

* "By Mr. Hart."—These words, which were in the first edition of this Essay, our author omitted in the

am confident it never received in its own country, the most favourable to it would not put it in competition with many of Fletcher's or Ben Jonson's. In the rest of Corneille's comedies you have little humour; he tells you himself, his way is, first to shew two lovers in good intelligence with each other; in the working up of the play to embroil them by some mistake, and in the latter end to clear it, and reconcile them.

But of late years Moliere, the younger Corneille, Quinault, and some others, have been imitating afar off the quick turns and graces of the English stage. They have mixed their serious plays with mirth, like our tragi-comedies, since the death of Cardinal Richelieu;⁹ which Lisideius and many others not observing, have commended that in them for a virtue which they themselves no longer practise. Most of their new plays are, like some of ours, derived from the Spanish novels. There is scarce one of them without a veil, and a trusty Diego, who drolls much after the rate of *THE ADVENTURES*.¹ But their humours, if I may grace them with that name, are so thin-sown, that never above one of them comes up in any play. I dare

second. The play alluded to is, *THE MISTAKEN BEAUTY*, OR, *THE LIAR*, 4to. 1685; of which there is said to have been a former edition in 1661, under the latter title only.

⁹ Cardinal Richelieu died in 1642.

¹ *THE ADVENTURES OF FIVE HOURS*, written by Sir Samuel Tuke, and printed in 1663. Diego is one of the characters in it.

take upon me to find more variety of them in some one play of Ben Jonson's, than in all theirs together; as he who has seen *THE ALCHEMIST*, *THE SILENT WOMAN*, or *BARTHOLOMEW-FAIR*, cannot but acknowledge with me.

I grant the French have performed what was possible on the ground-work of the Spanish plays; what was pleasant before, they have made regular: but there is not above one good play to be writ on all those plots; they are too much alike to please often; which we need not the experience of our own stage to justify. As for their new way of mingling mirth with serious plot, I do not, with *Lisideius*, condemn the thing, though I cannot approve their manner of doing it. He tells us, we cannot so speedily recollect ourselves after a scene of great passion and concernment, as to pass to another of mirth and humour, and to enjoy it with any relish: but why should he imagine the soul of man more heavy than his senses? Does not the eye pass from an unpleasant object to a pleasant in a much shorter time than is required to this? and does not the unpleasantness of the first commend the beauty of the latter? The old rule of logick might have convinced him, that contraries, when placed near, set off each other. A continued gravity keeps the spirit too much bent; we must refresh it sometimes, as we bait in a journey, that we may go on with greater ease. A scene of mirth, mixed with tragedy, has the same effect upon us which our musick has betwixt the acts; which we find a relief to us from the best plots and language

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I grant the French have performed what was possible on the ground-work of the Spanish plays; what was pleasant before, they have made regular; but there is not above one good play to be writ on all those plots; they are too much alike to please often; which we need not the experience of our own stage to justify. As for their new way of mingling mirth with serious plot, I do not, with *Lisideius*, condemn the thing, though I cannot approve their manner of doing it. He tells us, we cannot so speedily recollect ourselves after a scene of great passion and concernment, as to pass to another of mirth and humour, and to enjoy it with any relish: but why should he imagine the soul of man more heavy than his senses? Does not the eye pass from an unpleasant object to a pleasant in a much shorter time than is required to this? and does not the unpleasantness of the first commend the beauty of the latter? The old rule of logick might have convinced him, that contraries, when placed near, set off each other. A continued gravity keeps the spirit too much bent; we must refresh it sometimes, as we bait in a journey, that we may go on with greater ease. A scene of mirth, mixed with tragedy, has the same effect upon us which our musick has betwixt the acts; which we find a relief to us from the best plots and language

of the stage, if the discourses have been long. I must therefore have stronger arguments, ere I am convinced that compassion and mirth in the same subject destroy each other ; and in the mean time cannot but conclude, to the honour of our nation, that we have invented, increased, and perfected a more pleasant way of writing for the stage, than was ever known to the ancients or moderns of any nation, which is tragi-comedy.

And this leads me to wonder why Lisideius and many others should cry up the barrenness of the French plots, above the variety and copiousness of the English. Their plots are single; they carry on one design, which is pushed forward by all the actors, every scene in the play contributing and moving towards it. Our plays, besides the main design, have under-plots or by-concernments, of less considerable persons and intrigues, which are carried on with the motion of the main plot : as they say the orb of the fixed stars, and those of the planets, though they have motions of their own, are whirled about by the motion of the *primum mobile*, in which they are contained. That similitude expresses much of the English stage; for if contrary motions may be found in nature to agree ; if a planet can go east and west at the same time ;—one way by virtue of his own motion, the other by the force of the first mover ;—it will not be difficult to imagine how the under-plot, which is only different, not contrary to the great design, may naturally be conducted along with it.

Eugenius has already shewn us, from the confession of the French poets, that the unity of action is sufficiently preserved, if all the imperfect actions of the play are conducing to the main design; but when those petty intrigues of a play are so ill ordered, that they have no coherence with the other, I must grant that *Lisideius* has reason to tax that want of due connexion; for co-ordination in a play is as dangerous and unnatural as in a state. In the mean time he must acknowledge, our variety, if well ordered, will afford a greater pleasure to the audience.

As for his other argument, that by pursuing one single theme they gain an advantage to express and work up the passions, I wish any example he could bring from them would make it good; for I confess their verses are to me the coldest I have ever read. Neither, indeed, is it possible for them, in the way they take, so to express passion, as that the effects of it should appear in the concernment of an audience, their speeches being so many declamations, which tire us with the length; so that instead of persuading us to grieve for their imaginary heroes, we are concerned for our own trouble, as we are in tedious visits of bad company; we are in pain till they are gone. When the French stage came to be reformed by Cardinal Richelieu, those long harangues were introduced to comply with the gravity of a churchman. Look upon the *CINNA* and the *POMPEY*; they are not so properly to be called plays, as long discourses of

reason of state ; and POLIEUCTE in matters of religion is as solemn as the long stops upon our organs. Since that time it is grown into a custom, and their actors speak by the hour-glass, like our parsons :³ nay, they account it the grace of their parts, and think themselves disparaged by the poet, if they may not twice or thrice in a play entertain the audience with a speech of an hundred lines. I deny not but this may suit well enough with the French ; for as we, who are a more sullen people, come to be diverted at our plays, so they, who are of an airy and gay temper, come thither to make themselves more serious : and this I conceive to be one reason why comedies are more pleasing to us, and tragedies to them. But to speak generally : it cannot be denied that short speeches and replies are more apt to move the passions and beget concernment in us, than the other ; for it is unnatural for any one in a gust of passion to speak long together, or for another in the same condition, to suffer him, without interruption. Grief and passion are like floods raised in little brooks by a sudden rain ; they are quickly up ; and if the concernment be poured unexpectedly in upon us, it overflows us : but a long sober shower gives them leisure to run out as they came in, without troubling the ordinary current. As for comedy, repartee is one of its chiefest graces ;

³ Formerly an hour-glass was fixed on the pulpit in all our churches.

the greatest pleasure of the audience is a chace of wit, kept up on both sides, and swiftly managed. And this our forefathers, if not we, have had in Fletcher's plays, to a much higher degree of perfection than the French poets can reasonably hope to reach.

There is another part of Lisideius his discourse, in which he has rather excused our neighbours, than commended them; that is, for aiming only to make one person considerable in their plays. 'Tis very true what he has urged; that one character in all plays, even without the poet's care, will have advantage of all the others; and that the design of the whole drama will chiefly depend on it. But this hinders not that there may be more shining characters in the play: many persons of a second magnitude, nay, some so very near, so almost equal to the first, that greatness may be opposed to greatness, and all the persons be made considerable, not only by their quality, but their action. 'Tis evident that the more the persons are, the greater will be the variety of the plot. If then the parts are managed so regularly, that the beauty of the whole be kept entire, and that the variety become not a perplexed and confused mass of accidents, you will find it infinitely pleasing to be led in a labyrinth of design, where you see some of your way before you, yet discern not the end till you arrive at it. And that all this is practicable, I can produce for examples many of our English plays: as *THE MAID'S TRAGEDY*, *THE ALCHEMIST*, *THE*

SILENT WOMAN: I was going to have named THE FOX, but that the unity of design seems not exactly observed in it; for there appear two actions in the play; the first naturally ending with the fourth act; the second forced from it in the fifth: which yet is the less to be condemned in him, because the disguise of Volpone, though it suited not with his character as a crafty or covetous person, agreed well enough with that of a voluptuary; and by it the poet gained the end at which he aimed, the punishment of vice, and the reward of virtue, both which that disguise produced. So that to judge equally of it, it was an excellent fifth act, but not so naturally proceeding from the former.

But to leave this, and pass to the latter part of Lisideius his discourse, which concerns relations: I must acknowledge with him, that the French have reason to hide that part of the action which would occasion too much tumult on the stage, and to choose rather to have it made known by narration to the audience. Farther, I think it very convenient, for the reasons he has given, that all incredible actions were removed; but, whether custom has so insinuated itself into our countrymen, or nature has so formed them to fierceness, I know not; but they will scarcely suffer combats and other objects of horror to be taken from them. And indeed, the indecency of tumults is all which can be objected against fighting: for why may not our imagination as well suffer itself to be deluded

with the probability of it, as with any other thing in the play? For my part, I can with as great ease persuade myself that the blows are given in good earnest, as I can, that they who strike them are kings or princes, or those persons which they represent. For objects of incredibility,—I would be satisfied from *Lisideius*, whether we have any so removed from all appearance of truth, as are those of *Corneille's ANDROMEDE*; a play which has been frequented the most of any he has writ. If the *Perseus*, or the son of an heathen god, the *Pegasus*, and the *Monster*, were not capable to choke a strong belief, let him blame any representation of ours hereafter. Those indeed were objects of delight; yet the reason is the same as to the probability: for he makes it not a ballet or masque, but a play, which is to resemble truth. But for death, that it ought not to be represented, I have, besides the arguments alledged by *Lisideius*, the authority of *Ben Jonson*, who has forborn it in his tragedies;⁴ for both the death of *Sejanus* and *Catiline* are related: though in the latter I cannot but observe one irregularity of that great poet; he has removed the scene in the same act from *Rome* to *Catiline's army*, and from thence again to *Rome*;

⁴ One cannot, without some degree of admiration and concern, find in various parts of this Essay the merits and conduct of these miserably tedious and uninteresting dramas, which at their first representation were scarcely endured, and are now read only as an exercise, gravely discussed, as if they were the most splendid and perfect productions of the English stage.

and besides, has allowed a very inconsiderable time, after Catiline's speech, for the striking of the battle, and the return of Petreius, who is to relate the event of it to the senate: which I should not animadvert on him, who was otherwise a painful observer of τὸ πρίπον, or the *decorum* of the stage, if he had not used extreme severity in his judgment on the incomparable Shakspeare for the same fault.*—To conclude on this subject of relations; if we are to be blamed for shewing too much of the action, the French are as faulty for discovering too little of it: a mean betwixt both should be observed by every judicious writer, so as the audience may neither be left unsatisfied by not seeing

* The only passage in which Jonson expressly mentions Shakspeare, is found in his *DISCOVERIES*; but it contains nothing relative to the present point. He has not, however, been sparing of covert sarcasms on that incomparable poet in various parts of his works; and probably meant to sneer at him in the following dialogue in *EVERY MAN OUT OF HIS HUMOUR*, to which, I suppose, our author here alludes.

" *Mit.* He cannot alter the scene without crossing the
" seas.

" *Cor.* He need not, having a whole island to run
" through, I thinke.

" *Mit.* No! how comes it then that *in some one play we*
" *see so many seas, countries, and kingdoms pass'd over with*
" *such admirable dexteritie?*

" *Cor.* O, that but shews how well the authors can
" *travaile in their vocation, and outrun the apprehension*
" *of their auditorie.*"

See also the Prologue to *EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR*, folio, 1616.

what is beautiful, or shocked by beholding what is either incredible or undecent.

I hope I have already proved in this discourse, that though we are not altogether so punctual as the French, in observing the laws of comedy, yet our errors are so few, and little, and those things wherein we excel them so considerable, that we ought of right to be preferred before them. But what will Lisideius say, if they themselves acknowledge they are too strictly bounded by those laws, for breaking which he has blamed the English? I will alledge Corneille's words, as I find them in the end of his Discourse of the three Unities:—*Il est facile aux speculatifs d'estre severes, &c.* " 'Tis
" easy for speculative persons to judge severely;
" but if they would produce to publick view ten
" or twelve pieces of this nature, they would per-
" haps give more latitude to the rules than I have
" done, when, by experience, they had known
" how much we are limited and constrained by
" them, and how many beauties of the stage they
" banished from it." To illustrate a little what he
has said:—By their servile observations of the
unities of time and place, and integrity of scenes,
they have brought on themselves that dearth of
plot, and narrowness of imagination, which may
be observed in all their plays. How many beautiful
accidents might naturally happen in two or three
days, which cannot arrive with any probability in
the compass of twenty-four hours? There is time
to be allowed also for maturity of design, which,
amongst great and prudent persons, such as are

often represented in tragedy, cannot, with any likelihood of truth, be brought to pass at so short a warning. Farther; by tying themselves strictly to the unity of place, and unbroken scenes, they are forced many times to omit some beauties which cannot be shewn where the act began; but might, if the scene were interrupted, and the stage cleared for the persons to enter in another place; and therefore the French poets are often forced upon absurdities: for if the act begins in a chamber, all the persons in the play must have some business or other to come thither, or else they are not to be shewn that act; and sometimes their characters are very unfitting to appear there: as, suppose it were the king's bed-chamber; yet the meanest man in the tragedy must come and dispatch his business there, rather than in the lobby or courtyard, (which is fitter for him,) for fear the stage should be cleared, and the scenes broken. Many times they fall by it into a greater inconvenience; for they keep their scenes unbroken, and yet change the place; as in one of their newest plays, where the act begins in the street. There a gentleman is to meet his friend; he sees him with his man, coming out from his father's house; they talk together, and the first goes out: the second, who is a lover, has made an appointment with his mistress; she appears at the window, and then we are to imagine the scene lies under it. This gentleman is called away, and leaves his servant with his mistress: presently her father is heard from within; the young lady is afraid the serving-

man should be discovered, and thrusts him into a place of safety, which is supposed to be her closet. After this, the father enters to the daughter, and now the scene is in a house; for he is seeking from one room to another for this poor Philipin, or French Diego,¹ who is heard from within, drolling and breaking many a miserable conceit on the subject of his sad condition. In this ridiculous manner the play goes forward, the stage being never empty all the while: so that the street, the window, the two houses, and the closet, are made to walk about, and the persons to stand still. Now, what I beseech you is more easy than to write a regular French play, or more difficult than to write an irregular English one, like those of Fletcher, or of Shakspeare?

If they content themselves, as Corneille did, with some flat design, which, like an ill riddle, is found out ere it be half proposed, such plots we can make every way regular, as easily as they; but whenever they endeavour to rise to any quick turns and counterturns of plot, as some of them have attempted, since Corneille's plays have been less in vogue, you see they write as irregularly as we, though they cover it more speciously. Hence the reason is perspicuous, why no French plays, when translated, have, or ever can succeed on the

¹ A servant in Sir Samuel Tuke's ADVENTURES OF FIVE HOURS; who is described by the author as "a great coward, and a pleasant droll." *Philipin* is, I suppose, a character in the French play alluded to.

English stage. For, if you consider the plots, our own are fuller of variety; if the writing, ours are more quick and fuller of spirit; and therefore 'tis a strange mistake in those who decry the way of writing plays in verse, as if the English therein imitated the French. We have borrowed nothing from them; our plots are weaved in English looms: we endeavour therein to follow the variety and greatness of characters which are derived to us from Shakspeare and Fletcher; the copiousness and well-knitting of the intrigues we have from Jonson; and for the verse itself we have English precedents of elder date than any of Corneille's plays. Not to name our old comedies before Shakspeare, which were all writ in verse of six feet, or Alexandrines,⁶ such as the French now use,—I can shew in Shakspeare, many scenes of rhyme

⁶ This assertion is made with too great latitude. Many of the old Interludes and Moralities before the time of Shakspeare were *chiefly*, but not entirely, composed of lines of twelve or fourteen syllables; and that sort of metre was generally appropriated to the Vice in the Moralities, and to the Clown or buffoon in other Interludes. But several of Lily's comedies, which were exhibited before the time of Shakspeare, were written almost entirely in prose; and some other comedies of that period, such as *THE TAMING OF A SHREW*, *THE OLD WIVES TALE*, *THE FAMOUS VICTORIES OF HENRY THE FIFTH*, &c. were written in blank verse, with prose occasionally intermixed. Of the long hobbling metre alluded to by our author, various specimens may be found at the end of *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*;—Shakspeare's *PLAYS* and *POEMS*, vol. ii. p. 203. edit. 1790.

together, and the like in Ben Jonson's tragedies: in *Catiline* and *Sejanus* sometimes thirty or forty lines,—I mean besides the Chorus, or the monologues; which, by the way, shewed Ben no enemy to this way of writing, especially if you read his *SAD SHEPHERD*, which goes sometimes on rhyme, sometimes on blank verse, like an horse who eases himself on trot and amble. You find him likewise commending Fletcher's pastoral of *THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS*, which is for the most part rhyme, though not refined to that purity to which it hath since been brought. And these examples are enough to clear us from a servile imitation of the French.

But to return whence I have digressed: I dare boldly affirm these two things of the English drama;—First, that we have many plays of ours as regular as any of theirs, and which, besides, have more variety of plot and characters; and secondly, that in most of the irregular plays of Shakspeare or Fletcher, (for Ben Jonson's are for the most part regular,) there is a more masculine fancy and greater spirit in the writing, than there is in any of the French. I could produce even in Shakspeare's and Fletcher's works, some plays which are almost exactly formed; as *THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR*, and *THE SCORNFUL LADY*: but because (generally speaking) Shakspeare, who writ first, did not perfectly observe the laws of comedy, and Fletcher, who came nearer to perfection, yet through carelessness made many faults;

I will take the pattern of a perfect play from Ben Jonson, who was a careful and learned observer of the dramattick laws, and from all his comedies I shall select *THE SILENT WOMAN*; of which I will make a short examen, according to those rules which the French observe.

As Neander was beginning to examine *THE SILENT WOMAN*, Eugenius, earnestly regarding him; I beseech you, Neander, said he, gratify the company, and me in particular, so far, as before you speak of the play, to give us a character of the author; and tell us frankly your opinion, whether you do not think all writers, both French and English, ought to give place to him.

I fear, replied Neander, that in obeying your commands I shall draw some envy on myself. Besides, in performing them, it will be first necessary to speak somewhat of Shakspeare and Fletcher, his rivals in poesy; and one of them, in my opinion, at least his equal, perhaps⁷ his superior.

To begin, then, with Shakspeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you

⁷ It is curious to observe with what caution our author speaks, when he ventures to place Shakspeare above Jonson; a caution which proves decisively the wretched taste of the period when he wrote.

feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation : he was naturally learned ; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature ; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike ; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid ; his comick wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him ; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eton say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better done in Shakspeare ;^s and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him, Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem : and in the last king's court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakspeare far above him.

^s See an account of a remarkable challenge on this subject, given by Mr. Hales to Ben Jonson and his partisans, *PLAYS and POEMS of SHAKSPEARE, ut supr.* vol. i. part i. p. 114.

Beaumont and Fletcher, of whom I am next to speak, had, with the advantage of Shakspeare's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts, improved by study; Beaumont especially being so accurate a judge of plays, that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and 'tis thought, used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots. What value he had for him, appears by the verses he writ to him; and therefore I need speak no farther of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem was their *PHILASTER*; for, before that, they had written two or three very unsuccessfully: as the like is reported of Ben Jonson, before he writ *EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR*. Their plots were generally more regular than Shakspeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death;⁹ and they understood

⁹ Sir Aston Cokain long since complained, that the booksellers who, in 1647, published thirty-four plays under the names of Beaumont and Fletcher, had not ascertained how many of them were written solely by Fletcher:

“ In the large book of playes you late did print,
 “ In Beaumont's and in Fletcher's name, why in't
 “ Did you not justice? give to each his due?
 “ For Beaumont of those many writ in few;
 “ And Massinger in other few: the main
 “ Being sole issues of sweet Fletcher's brain.”

Pope, as Mr. Spence has recorded in his *ANECDOTES*, asserted, that “ Beaumont was not concerned in above

and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better ; whose wild debaucheries, and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet before them could paint as they have done. Humour, which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe : they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection ; what words have since been taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage ; two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakspeare's or Jonson's : the reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in

four or five plays with Fletcher." But he was certainly mistaken ; for the following *nine* plays were undoubtedly the joint production of him and Fletcher : PHILASTER,—THE MAID'S TRAGEDY,—KING AND NO KING,—THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE,—CUPID'S REVENGE,—THE COXCOMB,—THE CAPTAIN,—THE HONEST MAN'S FORTUNE,—THE SCORNFUL LADY. Perhaps to this list should also be added THE FALSE ONE. Of these plays four only were included in the edition of 1647. All the other plays ascribed to these authors jointly, were, I believe, written by Fletcher alone, or in conjunction with Massinger, Field, Rowley, and others.—The last four plays which Fletcher produced were—A WIFE FOR A MONTH,—RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE,—THE FAIR MAID OF THE INN,—and THE NOBLE GENTLEMAN. He died in August, 1625 ; and the two pieces last named were not exhibited till after his death.—See Shakspeare's PLAYS, &c. *ut supr.* vol. i. p. ii. p. 222.

their more serious plays, which suits generally with all men's humours. Shakspeare's language is likewise a little obsolete,¹ and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs.

As for Jonson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself, (for his last plays were but his dotages,) I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit, and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was wanting to the drama, till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humour was his proper sphere; and in that he delighted most to represent

¹ This observation, made only fifty years after the death of Shakspeare, shews how little he was studied at the time this Essay was written, and how few of his readers had perused the works of his contemporaries. Dryden himself, it is clear, was not very conversant with our early writers; for in a subsequent piece he ascribes both to Jonson and Shakspeare, as anomalies, phrases which were the ordinary language of their time.—See his "Defence of the Epilogue" to THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

mechanick people. He was deeply conversant in the ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them: there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in Sejanus and Catiline. But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch; and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, 'twas that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his comedies especially: perhaps too, he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them: wherein, though he learnedly followed their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakspeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakspeare the greater wit. Shakspeare was the Homer, or father of our dramattick poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakspeare. To conclude of him; as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his *DISCOVERIES*, we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any wherewith the French can furnish us.

Having thus spoken of the author, I proceed to the examination of his comedy, *THE SILENT WOMAN*.

EXAMEN OF THE SILENT WOMAN.

To begin first with the length of the action ; it is so far from exceeding the compass of a natural day, that it takes not up an artificial one. 'Tis all included in the limits of three hours and an half, which is no more than is required for the presentment on the stage : a beauty perhaps not much observed ; if it had, we should not have looked on the Spanish translation of *FIVE HOURS*^a with so much wonder. The scene of it is laid in London ; the latitude of place is almost as little as you can imagine ; for it lies all within the compass of two houses, and after the first act, in one. The continuity of scenes is observed more than in any of our plays, except his own *FOX* and *ALCHEMIST*. They are not broken above twice or thrice at most in the whole comedy ; and in the two best of Corneille's plays, the *CID* and *CINNA*, they are interrupted once. The action of the play is entirely one ; the end or aim of which is the settling Morose's estate on Dauphine. The intrigue of it is the greatest and most noble of any pure unmixed comedy in any language : you see in it many persons of various characters and humours, and all delightful. As first, Morose, or an old man, to whom all noise but his own talking is offensive.

^a Sir Samuel Tuke's play, already mentioned.

Some who would be thought criticks, say this humour of his is forced : but to remove that objection, we may consider him first to be naturally of a delicate hearing, as many are, to whom all sharp sounds are unpleasant ; and secondly, we may attribute much of it to the peevishness of his age, or the wayward authority of an old man in his own house, where he may make himself obeyed ; and to this the poet seems to allude in his name Morose. Beside this, I am assured from divers persons, that Ben Jonson was actually acquainted with such a man, one altogether as ridiculous as he is here represented. Others say, it is not enough to find one man of such an humour ; it must be common to more, and the more common the more natural. To prove this, they instance in the best of comical characters, Falstaff. There are many men resembling him ; old, fat, merry, cowardly, drunken, amorous, vain, and lying. But to convince these people, I need but tell them, that humour is the ridiculous extravagance of conversation, wherein one man differs from all others. If then it be common, or communicated to many, how differs it from other men's ? or what indeed causes it to be ridiculous so much as the singularity of it ? As for Falstaff, he is not properly one humour, but a miscellany of humours or images, drawn from so many several men : that wherein he is singular is his wit, or those things he says *præter expectatum*, unexpected by the audience ; his quick evasions, when you imagine him surprised, which,

as they are extremely diverting of themselves, so receive a great addition from his person ; for the very sight of such an unwieldy old debauched fellow is a comedy alone. And here, having a place so proper for it, I cannot but enlarge somewhat upon this subject of humour into which I am fallen. The ancients had little of it in their comedies ; for the τὸ γελοῖον of the old comedy, of which Aristophanes was chief, was not so much to imitate a man, as to make the people laugh at some odd conceit, which had commonly somewhat of unnatural or obscene in it. Thus, when you see Socrates brought upon the stage, you are not to imagine him made ridiculous by the imitation of his actions, but rather by making him perform something very unlike himself: something so childish and absurd, as by comparing it with the gravity of the true Socrates, makes a ridiculous object for the spectators. In their new comedy which succeeded, the poets sought indeed to express the ἥθος, as in their tragedies the πάθος of mankind. But this ἥθος contained only the general characters of men and manners ; as old men, lovers, serving-men, courtezans, parasites, and such other persons as we see in their comedies ; all which they made alike : that is, one old man or father, one lover, one courtezan, so like another, as if the first of them had begot the rest of every sort : *Ex homine hunc natum dicas.* The same custom they observed likewise in their tragedies. As for the French, though they have the word

humeur among them, yet they have small use of it in their comedies or farces; they being but ill imitations of the *ridiculum*, or that which stirred up laughter in the old comedy. But among the English 'tis otherwise: where by humour is meant some extravagant habit, passion, or affection, particular (as I said before) to some one person, by the oddness of which, he is immediately distinguished from the rest of men; which being lively and naturally represented, most frequently begets that malicious pleasure in the audience which is testified by laughter; as all things which are deviations from customs are ever the aptest to produce it: though by the way this laughter is only accidental, as the person represented is fantastick or bizarre; but pleasure is essential to it, as the imitation of what is natural. The description of these humours, drawn from the knowledge and observation of particular persons, was the peculiar genius and talent of Ben Jonson; to whose play I now return.

Besides Morose, there are at least nine or ten different characters and humours in *THE SILENT WOMAN*; all which persons have several concerns of their own, yet are all used by the poet, to the conducting of the main design to perfection. I shall not waste time in commending the writing of this play; but I will give you my opinion, that there is more wit and acuteness of fancy in it than in any of Ben Jonson's. Besides, that he has here described the conversation of gentlemen in the

persons of True-Wit, and his friends, with more gaiety, air, and freedom, than in the rest of his comedies. For the contrivance of the plot, 'tis extreme elaborate, and yet withal easy; for the λύσις, or untying of it, 'tis so admirable, that when it is done, no one of the audience would think the poet could have missed it; and yet it was concealed so much before the last scene, that any other way would sooner have entered into your thoughts. But I dare not take upon me to commend the fabrick of it, because it is altogether so full of art, that I must unravel every scene in it to commend it as I ought. And this excellent contrivance is still the more to be admired, because 'tis comedy, where the persons are only of common rank, and their business private, not elevated by passions or high concernments, as in serious plays. Here every one is a proper judge of all he sees, nothing is represented but that with which he daily converses: so that by consequence all faults lie open to discovery, and few are pardonable. 'Tis this which Horace has judiciously observed:

*Creditur, ex medio quia res arcessit, habere
Sudoris minimum; sed habet Comedia tanto
Plus oneris, quanto veniæ minus.*

But our poet, who was not ignorant of these difficulties, has made use of all advantages; as he who designs a large leap takes his rise from the highest ground. One of these advantages is that which Corneille has laid down as the greatest

which can arrive to any poem, and which he himself could never compass above thrice in all his plays; viz. the making choice of some signal and long-expected day, whereon the action of the play is to depend. This day was that designed by Dauphine for the settling of his uncle's estate upon him; which, to compass, he contrives to marry him. That the marriage had been plotted by him long beforehand, is made evident by what he tells True-wit in the second act, that in one moment he had destroyed what he had been raising many months.

There is another artifice of the poet, which I cannot here omit, because by the frequent practice of it in his comedies, he has left it to us almost as a rule; that is, when he has any character or humour wherein he would shew a *coup de maître*, or his highest skill, he recommends it to your observation by a pleasant description of it before the person first appears. Thus, in BARTHOLOMEW-FAIR he gives you the pictures of Numps and Cokes, and in this those of Daw, Lafoole, Morose, and the Collegiate Ladies; all which you hear described before you see them. So that before they come upon the stage, you have a longing expectation of them, which prepares you to receive them favourably; and when they are there, even from their first appearance you are so far acquainted with them, that nothing of their humour is lost to you.

I will observe yet one thing further of this

admirable plot; the business of it rises in every act. The second is greater than the first; the third than the second; and so forward to the fifth. There too you see, till the very last scene, new difficulties arising to obstruct the action of the play; and when the audience is brought into despair that the business can naturally be effected, then, and not before, the discovery is made. But that the poet might entertain you with more variety all this while, he reserves some new characters to shew you, which he opens not till the second and third act; in the second *Morose*, *Daw*, the *Barber*, and *Otter*; in the third the *Collegiate Ladies*: all which he moves afterwards in by-walks, or under-plots, as diversions to the main design, lest it should grow tedious, though they are still naturally joined with it, and somewhere or other subservient to it. Thus, like a skilful chess-player, by little and little he draws out his men, and makes his pawns of use to his greater persons.³

If this comedy, and some others of his, were translated into French prose, (which would now

³ Of the piece on which our author has given so high an encomium, Drummond of Hawthornden, Jonson's contemporary and friend, has left the following anecdote: "When his play of *THE SILENT WOMAN* was first acted, there were found verses after on the stage against him, concluding, that that play was well named *THE SILENT WOMAN*, because there was never one man to say *plaudite* to it." *WORKS*, folio, 1711, p. 226.

be no wonder to them, since Moliere has lately given them plays out of verse, which have not displeased them,) I believe the controversy would soon be decided betwixt the two nations, even making them the judges. But we need not call our heroes to our aid. Be it spoken to the honour of the English, our nation can never want in any age such who are able to dispute the empire of wit with any people in the universe. And though the fury of a civil war, and power for twenty years together abandoned to a barbarous race of men, enemies of all good learning, had buried the muses under the ruins of monarchy; yet, with the restoration of our happiness, we see revived poesy lifting up its head, and already shaking off the rubbish which lay so heavy on it. We have seen since his majesty's return, many dramattick poems which yield not to those of any foreign nation, and which deserve all laurels but the English. I will set aside flattery and envy: it cannot be denied but we have had some little blemish either in the plot or writing of all those plays which have been made within these seven years; and perhaps there is no nation in the world so quick to discern them, or so difficult to pardon them, as ours: yet if we can persuade ourselves to use the candour of that poet, who, though the most severe of criticks, has left us this caution by which to moderate our censures—

— ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis

Offendar maculis ;—

if, in consideration of their many and great beauties, we can wink at some slight and little imperfections, if we, I say, can be thus equal to ourselves, I ask no favour from the French. And if I do not venture upon any particular judgment of our late plays, 'tis out of the consideration which an ancient writer gives me: *vivorum, ut magna admiratio, ita censura difficilis*: betwixt the extremes of admiration and malice, 'tis hard to judge uprightly of the living. Only I think it may be permitted me to say, that as it is no lessening to us to yield to some plays, and those not many, of our own nation in the last age, so can it be no addition to pronounce of our present poets, that they have far surpassed all the ancients, and the modern writers of other countries.

This was the substance of what was then spoke on that occasion; and Lisideius, I think, was going to reply, when he was prevented thus by Crites: I am confident, said he, that the most material things that can be said, have been already urged on either side; if they have not, I must beg of Lisideius that he will defer his answer till another time: for I confess I have a joint quarrel to you both, because you have concluded, without any reason given for it, that rhyme is proper for the stage. I will not dispute how ancient it hath been among us to write this way; perhaps our ancestors knew no better till Shakspeare's time.* I will

* See p. 96, n. 6.

grant it was not altogether left by him, and that Fletcher and Ben Jonson used it frequently in their Pastorals, and sometimes in other plays. Farther,—I will not argue whether we received it originally from our own countrymen, or from the French; for that is an inquiry of as little benefit, as theirs who, in the midst of the late plague, were not so solicitous to provide against it, as to know whether we had it from the malignity of our own air, or by transportation from Holland. I have therefore only to affirm, that it is not allowable in serious plays; for comedies, I find you already concluding with me. To prove this, I might satisfy myself to tell you, how much in vain it is for you to strive against the stream of the people's inclination; the greatest part of which are prepossessed so much with those excellent plays of Shakspeare, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson, which have been written out of rhyme, that except you could bring them such as were written better in it, and those too by persons of equal reputation with them, it will be impossible for you to gain your cause with them, who will still be judges. This it is to which, in fine, all your reasons must submit. The unanimous consent of an audience is so powerful, that even Julius Cæsar, (as Macrobius reports of him,) when he was perpetual dictator, was not able to balance it on the other side; but when Laberius, a Roman Knight, at his request contended in the *Mime* with another poet, he was forced to cry out, *Etiam favente me victus es, Laberi*. But I will not

on this occasion take the advantage of the greater number, but only urge such reasons against rhyme, as I find in the writings of those who have argued for the other way. First then, I am of opinion, that rhyme is unnatural in a play, because dialogue there is presented as the effect of sudden thought: for a play is the imitation of nature; and since no man, without premeditation speaks in rhyme, neither ought he to do it on the stage. This hinders not but the fancy may be there elevated to an higher pitch of thought than it is in ordinary discourse; for there is a probability that men of excellent and quick parts may speak noble things *extempore*: but those thoughts are never fettered with the numbers or sound of verse without study, and therefore it cannot be but unnatural to present the most free way of speaking in that which is the most constrained. For this reason, says Aristotle, 'tis best to write tragedy in that kind of verse which is the least such, or which is nearest prose: and this amongst the ancients was the Iambick, and with us is blank verse, or the measure of verse kept exactly without rhyme. These numbers therefore are fittest for a play; the others for a paper of verses, or a poem; blank verse being as much below them, as rhyme is improper for the drama. And if it be objected that neither are blank verses made *extempore*, yet, as nearest nature, they are still to be preferred.—But there are two particular exceptions, which many besides myself have had to verse; by which it will appear yet

more plainly how improper it is in plays. And the first of them is grounded on that very reason for which some have commended rhyme; they say, the quickness of repartees in argumentative scenes receives an ornament from verse. Now what is more unreasonable than to imagine that a man should not only light upon the wit, but the rhyme too, upon the sudden? This nicking of him who spoke before both in sound and measure, is so great an happiness, that you must at least suppose the persons of your play to be born poets: *Arcades omnes, et cantare pares, et respondere parati*: they must have arrived to the degree of *quicquid conabar dicere*;—to make verses almost whether they will or no. If they are any thing below this, it will look rather like the design of two, than the answer of one: it will appear that your actors hold intelligence together; that they perform their tricks like fortune-tellers, by confederacy. The hand of art will be too visible in it, against that maxim of all professions—*Ars est celare artem*; that it is the greatest perfection of art to keep itself undiscovered. Nor will it serve you to object, that however you manage it, 'tis still known to be a play; and consequently, the dialogue of two persons, understood to be the labour of one poet. For a play is still an imitation of nature; we know we are to be deceived, and we desire to be so; but no man ever was deceived but with a probability of truth; for who will suffer a gross lie to be fastened on him? Thus we sufficiently under-

stand, that the scenes which represent cities and countries to us, are not really such, but only painted on boards and canvass; but shall that excuse the ill painture or designment of them? Nay, rather ought they not to be laboured with so much the more diligence and exactness, to help the imagination? since the mind of man does naturally tend to truth; and therefore the nearer any thing comes to the imitation of it, the more it pleases.

Thus, you see, your rhyme is incapable of expressing the greatest thoughts naturally, and the lowest it cannot with any grace: for what is more unbefitting the majesty of verse, than to call a servant, or bid a door be shut in rhyme? and yet you are often forced on this miserable necessity. But verse, you say, circumscribes a quick and luxuriant fancy, which would extend itself too far on every subject, did not the labour which is required to well-turned and polished rhyme, set bounds to it. Yet this argument, if granted, would only prove that we may write better in verse, but not more naturally. Neither is it able to evince that; for he who wants judgment to confine his fancy in blank verse, may want it as much in rhyme: and he who has it will avoid errors in both kinds.² Latin verse was as great a

² All the arguments here adduced by Crites against rhyme, are found almost *verbatim* in the Preface of Sir Robert Howard, printed in a preceding part of this

confinement to the imagination of those poets, as rhyme to ours; and yet you find Ovid saying too much on every subject. *Nescivit* (says Seneca) *quod bene cessit relinquere*: of which he gives you one famous instance in his description of the deluge:

Omnia pontus erat, deerant quoque litora ponto.

Now all was sea, nor had that sea a shore.

Thus Ovid's fancy was not limited by verse, and Virgil needed not verse to have bounded his.

In our own language we see Ben Jonson confining himself to what ought to be said, even in the liberty of blank verse; and yet Corneille, the most judicious of the French poets, is still varying the same sense an hundred ways, and dwelling eternally on the same subject, though confined by

volume. On second thoughts, therefore, I believe that he, and not lord Roscommon, was shadowed under the character of CRITES; though that nobleman might with sufficient propriety have been introduced employing the printed arguments of Sir Robert Howard on this subject. With respect to the words noticed in a former page, (p. 40)—“for hear *your* Horace saying,” &c.—though Lord Roscommon had not yet published his translation of THE ART OF POETRY, Dryden might have known that he was a favourite author of Roscommon's, and hence have thus described the Roman poet: but Sir Robert Howard having in his Preface frequently quoted Horace, and appealed to his authority, these words may with equal propriety denote *his* admired author; and therefore sufficiently well agree with what is now suggested,—that Sir Robert Howard is the CRITES of the piece before us.

rhyme. Some other exceptions I have to verse; but since these I have named are for the most part already publick, I conceive it reasonable they should first be answered.

It concerns me less than any, said Neander, (seeing he had ended,) to reply to this discourse; because when I should have proved that verse may be natural in plays, yet I should always be ready to confess, that those which I have written in this kind* come short of that perfection which is required. Yet since you are pleased I should undertake this province, I will do it, though with all imaginable respect and deference, both to that person³ from whom you have borrowed your strongest arguments, and to whose judgment, when I have said all, I finally submit. But before I proceed to answer your objections, I must first remember you, that I exclude all comedy from my defence; and next that I deny not but blank verse may be also used; and content myself only to assert, that in serious plays where the subject and characters are great, and the plot unmixed with mirth, which might allay or divert these concernments which are produced, rhyme is there as natural and more effectual than blank verse.

* I have suggested in a former page, that the character of NEANDER was intended to represent our author. The passage before us, and the subsequent defence of rhyming tragedies, are the grounds of my conjecture.

³ Sir Robert Howard.

And now having laid down this as a foundation, —to begin with Crites,—I must crave leave to tell him, that some of his arguments against rhyme reach no farther than from the faults or defects of ill rhyme, to conclude against the use of it in general. May not I conclude against blank verse by the same reason? If the words of some poets who write in it, are either ill chosen, or ill placed, which makes not only rhyme, but all kind of verse in any language unnatural, shall I, for their vicious affectation, condemn those excellent lines of Fletcher, which are written in that kind? Is there any thing in rhyme more constrained than this line in blank verse?—*I heaven invoke, and strong resistance make*; where you see both the clauses are placed unnaturally, that is, contrary to the common way of speaking, and that without the excuse of a rhyme to cause it: yet you would think me very ridiculous, if I should accuse the stubbornness of blank verse for this, and not rather the stiffness of the poet. Therefore, Crites, you must either prove that words, though well chosen, and duly placed, yet render not rhyme natural in itself; or that however natural and easy the rhyme may be, yet it is not proper for a play. If you insist on the former part, I would ask you, what other conditions are required to make rhyme natural in itself, besides an election of apt words, and a right disposition of them? For the due choice of your words expresses your sense naturally, and the due placing them adapts the rhyme

to it. If you object that one verse may be made for the sake of another, though both the words and rhyme be apt, I answer, it cannot possibly so fall out; for either there is a dependance of sense betwixt the first line and the second, or there is none: if there be that connection, then in the natural position of the words the latter line must of necessity flow from the former; if there be no dependance, yet still the due ordering of words makes the last line as natural in itself as the other: so that the necessity of a rhyme never forces any but bad or lazy writers to say what they would not otherwise. 'Tis true, there is both care and art required to write in verse. A good poet never establishes the first line, till he has sought out such a rhyme as may fit the sense, already prepared to heighten the second: many times the close of the sense falls into the middle of the next verse, or farther off, and he may often prevail himself of the same advantages in English which Virgil had in Latin,—he may break off in the hemistick, and begin another line. Indeed, the not observing these two last things, makes plays which are writ in verse, so tedious: for though, most commonly, the sense is to be confined to the couplet, yet nothing that does *perpetuo tenore fluere*, run in the same channel, can please always. 'Tis like the murmuring of a stream, which not varying in the fall, causes at first attention, at last drowsiness. Variety of cadences is the best rule; the

greatest help to the actors, and refreshment to the audience.

If then verse may be made natural in itself, how becomes it unnatural in a play? You say the stage is the representation of nature, and no man in ordinary conversation speaks in rhyme. But you foresaw when you said this, that it might be answered—neither does any man speak in blank verse, or in measure without rhyme. Therefore you concluded, that which is nearest nature is still to be preferred. But you took no notice that rhyme might be made as natural as blank verse, by the well placing of the words, &c. All the difference between them, when they are both correct, is, the sound in one, which the other wants; and if so, the sweetness of it, and all the advantage resulting from it, which are handled in the Preface to *THE RIVAL LADIES*, will yet stand good. As for that place of Aristotle, where he says, plays should be writ in that kind of verse which is nearest prose, it makes little for you; blank verse being properly but measured prose. Now measure alone, in any modern language, does not constitute verse; those of the ancients in Greek and Latin consisted in quantity of words, and a determinate number of feet. But when, by the inundation of the Goths and Vandals into Italy, new languages were introduced, and barbarously mingled with the Latin, of which the Italian, Spanish, French, and ours, (made out of them and the Teutonical,) are dialects, a new way of poesy

was practised ; new, I say, in those countries, for in all probability it was that of the conquerors in their own nations : at least we are able to prove, that the eastern people have used it from all antiquity.⁴ This new way consisted in measure or number of feet, and rhyme ; the sweetness of rhyme, and observation of accent, supplying the place of quantity in words, which could neither exactly be observed by those barbarians, who knew not the rules of it, neither was it suitable to their tongues, as it had been to the Greek and Latin. No man is tied in modern poesy to observe any farther rule in the feet of his verse, but that they be dissyllables ; whether Spondee, Trochee, or Iambick, it matters not ; only he is obliged to rhyme : neither do the Spanish, French, Italian, or Germans, acknowledge at all, or very rarely, any such kind of poesy as blank verse amongst them. Therefore, at most 'tis but a poetick prose, a *sermo pedestris* ; and as such, most fit for comedies, where I acknowledge rhyme to be improper.—Farther ; as to that quotation of Aristotle, our couplet verses may be rendered as near prose as blank verse itself, by using those advantages I lately named,—as breaks in an hemistick, or running the sense into another line,—thereby making art and order appear as loose and free as nature : or not tying ourselves to couplets strictly, we may use the benefit of the Pindarick way prac-

⁴ Vide Daniel his Defence of Rhyme. D.

tised in *THE SIEGE OF RHODES*; where the numbers vary, and the rhyme is disposed carelessly, and far from often chyming. Neither is that other advantage of the ancients to be despised, of changing the kind of verse when they please, with the change of the scene, or some new entrance; for they confine not themselves always to iambicks, but extend their liberty to all lyric numbers, and sometimes even to hexameter. But I need not go so far to prove that rhyme, as it succeeds to all other offices of Greek and Latin verse, so especially to this of plays, since the custom of nations at this day confirms it; the French, Italian, and Spanish tragedies are generally writ in it; and sure the universal consent of the most civilized parts of the world, ought in this, as it doth in other customs, to include the rest.

But perhaps you may tell me, I have proposed such a way to make rhyme natural, and consequently proper to plays, as is unpracticable; and that I shall scarce find six or eight lines together in any play, where the words are so placed and chosen as is required to make it natural. I answer, no poet need constrain himself at all times to it. It is enough he makes it his general rule; for I deny not but sometimes there may be a greatness in placing the words otherwise; and sometimes they may sound better; sometimes also the variety itself is excuse enough. But if, for the most part, the words be placed as they are in the negligence of prose, it is sufficient to denominate the way

practicable ; for we esteem that to be such, which in the trial oftner succeeds than misses. And thus far you may find the practice made good in many plays : where you do not, remember still, that if you cannot find six natural rhymes together, it will be as hard for you to produce as many lines in blank verse, even among the greatest of our poets, against which I cannot make some reasonable exception.

And this, Sir, calls to my remembrance the beginning of your discourse, where you told us we should never find the audience favourable to this kind of writing, till we could produce as good plays in rhyme, as Ben Jonson, Fletcher, and Shakspeare, had writ out of it. But it is to raise envy to the living, to compare them with the dead. They are honoured, and almost adored by us, as they deserve ; neither do I know any so presumptuous of themselves as to contend with them. Yet give me leave to say thus much, without injury to their ashes ; that not only we shall never equal them, but they could never equal themselves, were they to rise and write again. We acknowledge them our fathers in wit ; but they have ruined their estates themselves, before they came to their children's hands. There is scarce an humour, a character, or any kind of plot, which they have not used. All comes sullied or wasted to us : and were they to entertain this age, they could not now make so plenteous treatments out of such decayed fortunes. This therefore will be a good

argument to us, either not to write at all, or to attempt some other way. There is no bays to be expected in their walks: *tentanda via est, quâ me quoque possum tollere humo.*

This way of writing in verse they have only left free to us; our age is arrived to a perfection in it, which they never knew; and which (if we may guess by what of theirs we have seen in verse, as *THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS*, and *SAD SHEPHERD*) 'tis probable they never could have reached. For the genius of every age is different; and though ours excel in this, I deny not but that to imitate nature in that perfection which they did in prose, is a greater commendation than to write in verse exactly. As for what you have added—that the people are not generally inclined to like this way,—if it were true, it would be no wonder, that betwixt the shaking off an old habit, and the introducing of a new, there should be difficulty. Do we not see them stick to Hopkins' and Sternhold's psalms, and forsake those of David, I mean Sandys his translation of them? If by the people you understand the multitude, the *οἱ πολλοί*, 'tis no matter what they think; they are sometimes in the right, sometimes in the wrong: their judgment is a mere lottery. *Est ubi plebs rectè putat, est ubi peccat.*⁴ Horace says it of the vulgar, judging poesy. But if you mean the mixed audience of

⁴ Our author here again has quoted from memory. Horace's line is—

Interdum vulgus rectum videt, est ubi peccat.

the populace and the noblesse, I dare confidently affirm that a great part of the latter sort are already favourable to verse; and that no serious plays written since the king's return have been more kindly received by them, than *THE SIEGE OF RHODES*, the *MUSTAPHA*, *THE INDIAN QUEEN*, and *INDIAN EMPEROR*.

But I come now to the inference of your first argument. You said that the dialogue of plays is presented as the effect of sudden thought, but no man speaks suddenly, or *extempore*, in rhyme; and you inferred from thence, that rhyme, which you acknowledge to be proper to epick poesy, cannot equally be proper to dramattick, unless we could suppose all men born so much more than poets, that verses should be made in them, not by them.

It has been formerly urged by you, and confessed by me, that since no man spoke any kind of verse *extempore*, that which was nearest nature was to be preferred. I answer you, therefore, by distinguishing betwixt what is nearest to the nature of comedy, which is the imitation of common persons and ordinary speaking, and what is nearest the nature of a serious play: this last is indeed the representation of nature, but 'tis nature wrought up to an higher pitch. The plot, the charaters, the wit, the passions, the descriptions, are all exalted above the level of common converse, as high as the imagination of the poet can carry them, with proportion to verisimilitude. Tragedy, we know, is wont to image to us the minds and

fortunes of noble persons, and to portray these exactly; heroick rhyme is nearest nature, as being the noblest kind of modern verse.

*Indignatur enim privatis, et prope socco
Dignis, carminibus, narrari cæna Thyestæ—*

says Horace: and in another place,

Effutire leves indigna tragædia versus—.

Blank verse is acknowledged to be too low for a poem, nay more, for a paper of verses; but if too low for an ordinary sonnet, how much more for tragedy, which is by Aristotle in the dispute betwixt the epick poesy and the dramattick, for many reasons he there alledges, ranked above it?

But setting this defence aside, your argument is almost as strong against the use of rhyme in poems as in plays; for the epick way is every where interlaced with dialogue, or discursive scenes; and therefore you must either grant rhyme to be improper there, which is contrary to your assertion, or admit it into plays by the same title which you have given it to poems. For though tragedy be justly preferred above the other, yet there is a great affinity between them, as may easily be discovered in that definition of a play which Lisideius gave us. The *genus* of them is the same,—a just and lively image of human nature, in its actions, passions, and traverses of fortune: so is the end,—namely, for the delight and benefit of mankind. The characters and persons are still the same, viz, the greatest of both sorts; only the

manner of acquainting us with those actions, passions, and fortunes, is different. Tragedy performs it *viva voce*, or by action, in dialogue; wherein it excels the epick poem, which does it chiefly by narration, and therefore is not so lively an image of human nature. However, the agreement betwixt them is such, that if rhyme be proper for one, it must be for the other. Verse, 'tis true, is not the effect of sudden thought; but this hinders not that sudden thought may be represented in verse, since those thoughts are such as must be higher than nature can raise them without premeditation, especially to a continuance of them, even out of verse; and consequently you cannot imagine them to have been sudden either in the poet or the actors. A play, as I have said, to be like nature, is to be set above it; as statues which are placed on high are made greater than the life, that they may descend to the sight in their just proportion.

Perhaps I have insisted too long on this objection; but the clearing of it will make my stay shorter on the rest. You tell us, Crites, that rhyme appears most unnatural in repartees, or short replies: when he who answers, (it being presumed he knew not what the other would say, yet) makes up that part of the verse which was left incomplete, and supplies both the sound and measure of it. This you say looks rather like the confederacy of two, than the answer of one.

This, I confess, is an objection which is in every man's mouth, who loves not rhyme: but suppose,

I beseech you, the repartee were made only in blank verse, might not part of the same argument be turned against you? for the measure is as often supplied there, as it is in rhyme; the latter half of the hemistick as commonly made up, or a second line subjoined as a reply to the former; which any one leaf in Jonson's plays will sufficiently clear to you. You will often find in the Greek tragedians, and in Seneca, that when a scene grows up into the warmth of repartees, which is the close fighting of it, the latter part of the trimeter is supplied by him who answers; and yet it was never observed as a fault in them by any of the ancient or modern critics. The case is the same in our verse, as it was in theirs; rhyme to us being in lieu of quantity to them.^s But if no latitude is to be allowed a poet, you take from him not only his licence of *quidlibet audendi*, but you tie him up in a straiter compass than you would a philosopher. This is indeed *Musas colere severiores*. You would have him follow nature, but he must follow her on foot: you have dismounted him from his Pegasus. But you tell us, this supplying the last half of a verse, or adjoining a whole second to the former, looks more like the design of two, than the answer of one. Suppose we acknowledge it: how comes this confederacy to be more displeasing to you, than in a dance which is well contrived?

^s This position is not true. It is *accent*, not *rhyme*, which in English verse stands in the place of *quantity*.

You see there the united design of many persons to make up one figure : after they have separated themselves in many petty divisions, they rejoin one by one into a gross : the confederacy is plain amongst them, for chance could never produce any thing so beautiful ; and yet there is nothing in it, that shocks your sight. I acknowledge the hand of art appears in repartee, as of necessity it must in all kind of verse. But there is also the quick and poignant brevity of it (which is an high imitation of nature in those sudden gusts of passion) to mingle with it ; and this, joined with the cadency and sweetness of the rhyme, leaves nothing in the soul of the hearer to desire. 'Tis an art which appears ; but it appears only like the shadowings of painture, which being to cause the rounding of it, cannot be absent ; but while that is considered, they are lost : so while we attend to the other beauties of the matter, the care and labour of the rhyme is carried from us, or at least drowned in its own sweetness, as bees are sometimes buried in their honey. When a poet has found the repartee, the last perfection he can add to it, is to put it into verse. However good the thought may be, however apt the words in which 'tis couched, yet he finds himself at a little unrest, while rhyme is wanting : he cannot leave it till that comes naturally, and then is at ease, and sits down contented.

From replies, which are the most elevated thoughts of verse, you pass to those which are

most mean, and which are common with the lowest of household conversation. In these, you say, the majesty of verse suffers. You instance in the calling of a servant, or commanding a door to be shut, in rhyme. This, Crites, is a good observation of your's, but no argument : for it proves no more but that such thoughts should be waved, as often as may be, by the address of the poet. But suppose they are necessary in the places where he uses them, yet there is no need to put them into rhyme. He may place them in the beginning of a verse, and break it off, as unfit, when so debased, for any other use ; or granting the worst,—that they require more room than the hemistick will allow, yet still there is a choice to be made of the best words, and least vulgar, provided they be apt to express such thoughts. Many have blamed rhyme in general, for this fault, when the poet with a little care might have redressed it. But they do it with no more justice, than if English poesy should be made ridiculous for the sake of the Water-poet's⁶ rhymes. Our language is noble, full, and significant ; and I know not why he who is master of it may not clothe ordinary things in it as decently as the Latin, if he use the same diligence in his choice of words : *delectus verborum origo est eloquentiæ*. It was the saying of Julius Cæsar, one so curious in his, that none of

⁶ John Taylor, who was thus denominated, from his being a waterman on the Thames. See an account of him in Wood's *ATH. OXON.* ii. col. 373.

them can be changed but for a worse. One would think, *unlock the door*, was a thing as vulgar as could be spoken; and yet Seneca could make it sound high and lofty in his Latin:

Reserate clusos regii postes laris.

Set wide the palace gates.

But I turn from this exception, both because it happens not above twice or thrice in any play that those vulgar thoughts are used; and then too, were there no other apology to be made, yet the necessity of them, which is alike in all kind of writing, may excuse them. For if they are little and mean in rhyme, they are of consequence such in blank verse. Besides that the great eagerness and precipitation with which they are spoken, makes us rather mind the substance than the dress; that for which they are spoken, rather than what is spoke. For they are always the effect of some hasty concernment, and something of consequence depends on them.

Thus, Crites, I have endeavoured to answer your objections: it remains only that I should vindicate an argument for verse, which you have gone about to overthrow. It had formerly been said, that the easiness of blank verse renders the poet too luxuriant, but that the labour of rhyme bounds and circumscribes an over-fruitful fancy; the sense⁷ there being commonly confined to the

⁷ The edition of 1684, and all the modern editions, read—"the *scene* there," &c. The true reading is found in the original copy of 1668.

couplet, and the words so ordered that the rhyme naturally follows them, not they the rhyme. To this you answered, that it was no argument to the question in hand; for the dispute was not which way a man may write best, but which is most proper for the subject on which he writes.

First, give me leave, Sir, to remember you, that the argument against which you raised this objection, was only secondary: it was built on this hypothesis,—that to write in verse was proper for serious plays. Which supposition being granted, (as it was briefly made out in that discourse, by shewing how verse might be made natural,) it asserted, that this way of writing was an help to the poet's judgment, by putting bounds to a wild overflowing fancy. I think, therefore, it will not be hard for me to make good what it was to prove on that supposition. But you add, that were this let pass, yet he who wants judgment in the liberty of his fancy, may as well shew the defect of it when he is confined to verse; for he who has judgment will avoid errors, and he who has it not, will commit them in all kinds of writing.

This argument, as you have taken it from a most acute person,* so I confess it carries much weight in it: but by using the word judgment here indefinitely, you seem to have put a fallacy upon us. I grant, he who has judgment, that is, so profound, so strong, or rather so infallible a judgment, that he needs no helps to keep it always

* See Sir Robert Howard's Preface, *ante* p. 21.

poised and upright, will commit no faults either in rhyme or out of it. And on the other extreme, he who has a judgment so weak and crazed that no helps can correct or amend it, shall write scurvily out of rhyme, and worse in it. But the first of these judgments is no where to be found, and the latter is not fit to write at all. To speak therefore of judgment as it is in the best poets; they who have the greatest proportion of it, want other helps than from it, within. As for example, you would be loth to say, that he who is endued with a sound judgment has no need of history, geography, or moral philosophy, to write correctly. Judgment is indeed the master-workman in a play; but he requires many subordinate hands, many tools to his assistance. And verse I affirm to be one of these: 'tis a rule and line by which he keeps his building compact and even, which otherwise lawless imagination would raise either irregularly or loosely; at least, if the poet commits errors with this help, he would make greater and more without it:—'tis, in short, a slow and painful, but the surest kind of working. Ovid, whom you accuse for luxuriancy in verse, had perhaps been farther guilty of it, had he writ in prose. And for your instance of Ben Jonson, who, you say, writ exactly without the help of rhyme; you are to remember, 'tis only an aid to a luxuriant fancy, which his was not: as he did not want imagination, so none ever said he had much to spare. Neither was verse then refined so much, to be an help to that age, as it is to ours. Thus then the second

thoughts being usually the best, as receiving the maturest digestion from judgment, and the last and most mature product of those thoughts being artful and laboured verse, it may well be inferred, that verse is a great help to a luxuriant fancy; and this is what that argument which you opposed was to evince.

Neander was pursuing this discourse so eagerly, that Eugenius had called to him twice or thrice, ere he took notice that the barge stood still, and that they were at the foot of Somerset-stairs, where they had appointed it to land. The company were all sorry to separate so soon, though a great part of the evening was already spent; and stood a-while looking back on the water, upon which the moon-beams played, and made it appear like floating quicksilver: at last they went up through a crowd of French people, who were merrily dancing in the open air, and nothing concerned for the noise of guns which had alarmed the town that afternoon. Walking thence together to the Piazza, they parted there; Eugenius and Lisideius to some pleasant appointment they had made, and Crites and Neander to their several lodgings.⁸

⁸ This Essay is printed from the author's second edition, published in 1684, collated *verbatim* with the first edition of 1668. That collation furnished me with the correction of some gross errors of the press which are found in the second copy, and which have disfigured all the modern editions. See p. 40: "We may guess at Menander's excellency by the plays of Terence, who translated some

of *his*." The edition of 1684, and the modern editions, read—"some of *them*;" which renders the passage nonsense. The true reading is found in the first edition.—So again, in p. 132 :—"the *sense* there being commonly confined to the couplet,"—instead of which, we have in the second, and all the subsequent editions, "—the *scene* there," &c. In one other place also, I have adhered to the first copy: (see p. 115.) "Now what is more unreasonable, than to imagine that a man should not only *light upon* the wit, but the rhyme too, upon the sudden?"—The revised edition reads—"Now what is more unreasonable, than to imagine that a man should *imagine*," &c. This, I conceive, was not a correction of the author's, but an error of the press, in consequence of the word *imagine* having occurred just before. To imagine *wit*, is sufficiently intelligible; but to imagine a *rhyme*, is an expression that our author would hardly have used.

Between the first and second edition of this Essay sixteen years elapsed, in which interval he appears to have revised and corrected it with great care, various changes being made, chiefly in the language, in almost every page; a degree of solicitude and attention which, I believe, few of his poetical productions exhibit. As the progressive improvement of so great a writer may afford matter of curiosity and instruction to many readers. I subjoin the principal variations between the two copies. The passages printed chiefly in Italicks are given as they stand in the revised edition of 1684; those principally in the Roman character, as they appear in the original copy of 1668. The pages referred to are those of the present edition.

P. 34. "—so that all men being alarmed with it, and in a dreadful suspence of the event which they knew was then deciding." (1684.)

"—which we knew was then deciding." (1668).

P. 35. "— *they perceived the air to break about them—*"

"— *they perceived the air break about them—*"

Ibid. "— *adding that we had but this—*"

"— *adding, we had but this—*"

P. 36. "— *as to let them be often desired, and long expected.*"

"— *as to let them be often called for, and long expected.*"

Ibid. "— *a funeral elegy on the duke.*"

The original edition has—"upon the duke." In almost every other passage where the preposition *upon* occurs, it is changed in the second copy, as in the present instance, to *on*.

Ibid. "— *wherein after they have crowned his valour with many laurels, they will at last deplore—*"

"— *and after they have crowned, &c. at last deplore.—*"

P. 37. "— *I would not have them worse used than one of their brethren was by Sylla the Dictator.*"

"— *I would not have them worse used than Sylla the Dictator did one of their brethren.*"

Ibid. "— *one who is so much a well-wisher to the satire, that he intends at least to spare no man; and though, &c. yet he ought to be punished—*"

"— *one that is so much a well-wisher to the satire, that he spares no man; and though, &c. yet ought to be punished.—*"

P. 39. "— *especially him whom you first described—*"

"— *especially him who you first described.*"

Ibid. "— *but what will you say, if he has been received amongst great persons. I can assure you he is at this day the envy of one who—*"

"— *but what will you say, if he has been received*

amongst the great ones. I assure you he is at this day the envy of a person who—.”

P. 40. “ — I cannot think so contemptibly of the age in which I live—”

“ — I cannot think so contemptibly of the age I live in—.”

P. 41. “ — Crites - - - told Eugenius that if he pleased—”

“ — Crites - - - told Eugenius that he approved his proposition, and if he pleased, &c.”

P. 42. “ — as we have many now living, or who lately were.—”

“ — as we have many now living, or who lately were so.”

P. 45. “ — yet wishing they had it, that desire is incitement enough—”

“ — yet wishing they had it, it is incitement enough.”

P. 46. “ — if yet they had ability to go through the work.”

“ — if yet they had ability to go through with it—”

Ibid. “ — of which none boast in this our age—”

“ — which none boast of in this our age—”

In like manner, in various instances where the preposition had been improperly placed at the end of the sentence, he corrected the error in the second copy.

P. 47. “ — that all the parts of it are (as near as may be) to be equally subdivided—”

“ — that all the parts of it are to be equally subdivided.”

P. 48. “ — they suffer you not to behold him till he is in sight of the goal—”

“ — you behold him not till he is in sight,” &c.

- P. 49. "— *he who enters second, has business with him who was on before; and before the second quits the stage, a third appears who has business with him.*"
 "— *he that enters second, &c.—a third appears who has business with the first.*"
- P. 51. "— *so long as Aristophanes and Plautus are extant—*"
 "— *so long as Aristophanes in the old, and Plautus in the new comedy,*" &c.
- Ibid. "— *the wit of which depended upon some custom or story—*"
 "— *whose wit depended on some custom,*" &c.
- P. 52. "— *whether you consider the bad plays of our age, or regard the good plays of the last, both the best and worst of the modern poets will instruct you to admire the ancients.*"
 "— *whether you consider the bad plays of our age, or the good ones of the last, &c.—to respect the ancients.*"
- P. 54. "— *Thirdly, the Catastasis, called by the Romans, Status, the height and full growth of the play; we may call it properly the Counterturn—*"
 "— *Thirdly, the Catastasis, or Counterturn—*"
- P. 56. "— *till he was to come with his eyes pulled out, to speak a hundred or more verses—*"
 "— *till, &c. to speak a hundred or two of verses—*"
- P. 57. "— *kind in nature to his mistress—*"
 "— *kind in nature to his wench—*"
- Ibid. "— *the old Elizabeth way, which was for maids to be seen,*" &c.
 "— *the old Elizabeth way, for maids to be seen,*" &c.

- P. 58. " *His Heautontimorumenos . . . takes up visibly two days, says Scaliger; the two first acts concluding the first day; the three last the day ensuing—.*"
- " — His Heautontimorumenos . . . two days; therefore, says Scaliger, the two first acts concluding the first day, were acted over-night, the three last on the ensuing day."
- P. 59. " — to give ample relation of the disorders he has raised —"
- " — to give ample relation of the garboils he has raised —."
- P. 60. " — which, by the way, was very inartificial, because" &c.
- " — which, by the way, was very inartificial to do, because"—&c.
- P. 62. " — the elegance of which . . . leaves an impression on our souls."
- " — the elegance of which . . . leaves an impression of the wit upon our souls."
- P. 66. " — as the women in Juvenal's time used to cry out in the fury of their lust. Any sudden gust," &c.
- " — as the women in Juvenal's time used to cry out in the fury of their lust. Then indeed to speak sense were an offence. Any sudden gust," &c.
- P. 77. " — a deeper impression of belief in us than all the actor can insinuate into us."
- " — a deeper, &c. than all the actor can persuade us to."
- P. 81. " — and make him punish himself with harder fare . . . to get up again what he had lost."
- " — and make him, &c. to get it up again."

- P. 87. "— *and their actors speak by the hour-glass, like our parsons.*"
"— *and their actors, &c. as our parsons do.*"
- P. 88. "— *with a speech of an hundred lines.*"
"— *with a speech of an hundred or two hundred lines.*"
- Ibid. "— *to a much higher degree of perfection than the French poets can reasonably hope to reach.*"
"— *to a much, &c. ---- than the French poets can arrive at.*"
- P. 89. "— *for there appear two actions in the play—*"
"— *for there appears two actions,*" &c.
- P. 90. "— *that the French have reason to hide ---- and to choose,*" &c.
"— *that the French have reason when they hide, ---- and choose,*" &c.
- P. 94. "— *and thrusts him into a place of safety, which is supposed to be her closet.*"
"— *and thrusts him through a door, which is supposed to be her closet.*"
- P. 96. "— *especially if you read his Sad Shepherd—*"
"— *especially if you look upon his Sad Shepherd.*"
- P. 99. "— *but he would produce it much better done in Shakspeare.*"
"— *but he would produce it much better treated of in Shakspeare.*"
- P. 101. "— *no poet before them could paint as they have done.*"
"— *no poet can ever paint as they have done.*"
- P. 103. "— *he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his comedies especially.*"
"— *he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his serious plays especially.*"

P. 104. "— *and in the Cid and Cinna ---- they are interrupted once.*"

"— *and in the Cid and Cinna ---- they are interrupted once a-piece.*"

P. 108. "— *our poet has made use of all advantages.*"

"— *our poet has prevailed himself of all advantages.*"

P. 112. "— *This was the substance—*" &c.

"— *This, my lord, was the substance—.*"

P. 118. "— *but since these I have named ---- are already publick—*"

"— *but being these I have named,*" &c.

P. 119. "— *and a right disposition of them.*"

"— *and a right disposing of them.*"

P. 120. "— *A good poet never establishes the first line—*"

"— *A good poet never concludes upon the first line—*"

P. 122. "— *at least we are able to prove that the eastern people have used it from all antiquity.*"

These words are not in the first edition.

P. 124. "— *There is scarce an humour, &c. which they have not used.*"

"— *There is scarce an humour, &c. which they have not blown upon.*"

Other minute variations I have not thought it necessary to set down.

DEFENCE OF THE ESSAY
OF
DRAMATICK POESY;

FIRST PRINTED IN QUARTO, IN 1668.

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PROLEGOMENA.

Sir Robert Howard, *in the same year in which the* ESSAY OF DRAMATICK POESY *was published, produced a play, entitled THE GREAT FAVOURITE, OR, THE DUKE OF LERMA; to which he prefixed an Address to the Reader, containing some observations on that Essay. This Address having occasioned a Reply from our author, I have thought it proper to give it a place here.*

TO THE READER.

I CANNOT plead the usual excuse for publishing this trifle, which is commonly the subject of most Prefaces, by charging it upon the importunity of friends; for, I confess, I was myself willing, at the first desire of Mr. Herringman, to print it; not for any great opinion that I had entertained, but for the opinion that others were pleased to express: which being told me by some friends, I was concerned to let the world judge what subject matter of offence was contained in it. Some were pleased to believe little of it mine: but they are both obliging to me, though perhaps not inten-

tentionally; the last, by thinking there was any thing in it that was worth so ill-designed an envy, as to place it to another author; the others, (perhaps the best-bred informers,) by continuing their displeasure towards me, since I most gratefully acknowledge to have received some advantage in the opinion of the sober part of the world, by the loss of theirs.

For the subject, I came accidentally to write upon it; for a gentleman brought a play to the King's Company, called *THE DUKE OF LERMA*; and by them I was desired to peruse it, and return my opinion, whether I thought it fit for the stage. After I had read it, I acquainted them, that in my judgment it would not be of much use for such a design; since the contrivance scarce would merit the name of a plot, and some of that assisted by a disguise; and it ended abruptly: and on the person of Philip the Third there was fixed such a mean character, and on the daughter of the Duke of Lerma such a vicious one, that I could not but judge it unfit to be presented by any that had a respect, not only to princes, but indeed to either man or woman. And about that time, being to go into the country, I was persuaded by Mr. Hart to make it my diversion there; that so great a hint might not be lost, as the Duke of Lerma saving himself in his last extremity by his unexpected disguise, which is as well in the true story as the old play: and besides that and the names,—my altering the most part of the characters, and the

whole design, made me incapable to use much more; though perhaps written with higher style and thoughts than I could attain to.

I intend not to trouble myself nor the world any more in such subjects, but take my leave of these my too long acquaintances; since that little fancy and liberty I once enjoyed, is now fettered in business of more unpleasant natures:⁹ yet, were I free to apply my thoughts as my own choice directed them, I should hardly again venture into the civil wars of censures,

*Ubi—nullos habitura triumphos.*¹

In the next place, I must ingenuously confess, that the manner of plays which now are in most esteem, is beyond my power to perform: nor do I condemn in the least any thing of what nature soever, that pleases, since nothing could appear to me a ruder folly than to censure the satisfaction of others: I rather blame the unnecessary understanding of some, that have laboured to give strict rules to things that are not mathematical; and with such eagerness pursuing their own seeming reasons, that at last we are to apprehend such argumentative poets will grow as strict as Sancho Panco's

⁹ Sir Robert Howard was about this time, I believe, made Secretary to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury. A few years afterwards he was appointed Auditor of the Exchequer, which valuable office he held to the time of his death in September, 1698.

¹ *Bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos?*

Lucan. i. 12.

doctor was, to our very appetites; for in the difference of tragedy and comedy, and of farce itself, there can be no determination but by the taste, nor in the manner of their composure; and whoever would endeavour to like or dislike by the rules of others, he will be as unsuccessful as if he should try to be persuaded into a power of believing, not what he must, but what others direct him to believe.

But, I confess, 'tis not necessary for poets to study strict reason; since they are so used to a greater latitude than is allowed by that severe inquisition, that they must infringe their own jurisdiction, to profess themselves obliged to argue well. I will not therefore pretend to say why I writ this play,—some scenes in blank verse, others in rhyme,—since I have no better a reason to give than chance, which waited upon my present fancy; and I expect no better a reason from any ingenious person, than his fancy for which he best relishes.

I cannot therefore but beg leave of the reader to take a little notice of the great pains the author of an *ESSAY OF DRAMATICK POESY* has taken, to prove rhyme as natural in a serious play, and more effectual than blank verse: thus he states the question, but pursues that which he calls natural in a wrong application; for 'tis not the question, whether rhyme or not rhyme, be best, or most natural for a grave and serious subject, but what is nearest the nature of that which it presents. Now, after all the endeavours of that ingenious person, a play will still be supposed to be a com-

position of several persons speaking *extempore*; and 'tis as certain, that good verses are the hardest things that can be imagined to be so spoken; so that if any will be pleased to impose the rule of measuring things to be the best, by being nearest nature, it is granted by consequence, that which is most remote from the thing supposed, must needs be most improper; and therefore I may justly say, that both I and the question were equally mistaken; for I do own, I had rather read good verses, than either blank verse or prose; and therefore the author did himself injury, if he like verse so well in plays, to lay down rules to raise arguments only unanswerable against himself.

But the same author being filled with the precedents of the ancients' writing their plays in verse, commends the thing, and assures us, that our language is noble, full, and significant; charging all defects upon the ill placing of words; and proves it by quoting Seneca, loftily expressing such an ordinary thing as shutting a door:

Reserate clusos regii postes laris.

I suppose he was himself highly affected with the sound of these words; but to have completed his dictates together with his arguments, he should have obliged us, by charming our ears with such an art of placing words, as in an English verse to express so loftily the shutting of a door, that we might have been as much affected with the sound of his words. This, instead of being an argument

upon the question rightly stated, is an attempt to prove that nothing may seem something, by the help of a verse, which I easily grant to be the ill-fortune of it; and therefore the question being so much mistaken, I wonder to see that author trouble himself twice about it,^a with such an absolute triumph declared by his own imagination: but I have heard that a gentleman in parliament going to speak twice, and being interrupted by another member, as against the orders of the house, he was excused by a third, assuring the house he had not yet spoken to the question.

But if we examine the general rules laid down for plays by strict reason, we shall find the errors equally gross; for the great foundation that is laid to build upon is nothing, as it is generally stated; which will appear upon the examination of the particulars.

First, we are told the plot should not be so ridiculously contrived, as to crowd two several countries into one stage; secondly, to cramp the accidents of many years or days into the representation of two hours and a half: and lastly, a conclusion drawn, that the only remaining dispute is concerning time, whether it should be contained in twelve, or four-and-twenty hours; and the place to be limited to the spot of ground, either in town or city, where the play is supposed to begin.

^a In the Dedication of *THE RIVAL LADIES*, and in the *ESSAY ON DRAMATICK POESY*.

And this is called nearest to nature ; for that is concluded most natural which is most probable, and nearest to that which it presents.

I am so well pleased with any ingenuous offers, as all these are, that I should not examine this strictly, did not the confidence of others force me to it ; there being not any thing more unreasonable to my judgment, than the attempt to infringe the liberty of opinion by rules so little demonstrative.

To shew, therefore, upon what ill grounds they dictate laws for Dramatick Poesy, I shall endeavour to make it evident, that there is no such thing as what they all pretend ; for, if strictly and duly weighed, 'tis as impossible for one stage to present two houses, or two rooms truly, as two countries or kingdoms ;³ and as impossible that five hours, or four-and-twenty hours should be two hours and a half, as that a thousand hours or years should be less than what they are, or the greatest part of time to be comprehended in the less ; for all being impossible, they are none of them nearest the truth, or nature, of what they present ; for impossibilities are all equal, and admit no degrees : and then if all those poets that have so fervently laboured to give rules as maxims, would but be

³ Dr. Johnson, in his admirable Preface to his edition of Shakspeare, has used some of the arguments here urged in defence of a breach of the unities of place and time ; but in language how different ! He had probably never seen Sir Robert Howard's play.

pleased to abbreviate, or endure to hear their reasons reduced into one strict definition, it must be, that there are degrees in impossibilities, and that many things which are not possible, may yet be more or less impossible; and from this proceed to give rules to observe the least absurdity in things which are not at all.

I suppose I need not trouble the reader with so impertinent a delay to attempt a farther confutation of such ill-grounded reasons, than thus by opening the true state of the case; nor do I design to make any farther use of it, than from hence to draw this modest conclusion;—that I would have all attempts of this nature be submitted to the fancy of others, and bear the name of propositions, not of confident laws, or rules made by demonstration; and then I shall not discommend any poet that dresses his play in such a fashion as his fancy best approves; and fairly leave it for others to follow, if it appears to them most convenient, and fullest of ornament.

But writing this Epistle in so much haste, I had almost forgot one argument or observation, which that author has most good fortune in;—it is in his *Epistle Dedicatory*, before his *ESSAY OF DRAMATICK POESY*, where, speaking of rhyme in plays, he desires it may be observed, that none are violent against it, but such as have not attempted it, or who have succeeded ill in the attempt; which, as to myself and him, I easily acknowledge: for I confess none has written in that way better than

himself, nor few worse than I. Yet, I hope, he is so ingenuous, that he would not wish this argument should extend further than to him and me: for if it should be received as a good one, all divines and philosophers would find a readier way of confutation than they yet have done, of any that should oppose the least thesis or definition, by saying, they were denied by none but such as never attempted to write, or succeeded ill in the attempt.

Thus, as I am one that am extremely well pleased with most of the propositions, which are ingeniously laid down in that Essay for regulating the stage, so I am also always concerned for the true honour of reason, and would have no spurious issue fathered upon her. Fancy may be allowed her wantonness; but reason is always pure and chaste: and as it resembles the sun in making all things clear, it also resembles it in its several positions; when it shines in full height, and directly ascendant over any subject, it leaves but little shadow; but when descended and grown low, its oblique shining renders the shadow larger than the substance, and gives the deceived person a wrong measure of his own proportion.

Thus, begging the Reader's excuse for this seeming impertinency, I submit what I have written to the liberty of his unconfined opinion, which is all the favour I ask of others to afford to me.

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A

DEFENCE

OF AN ESSAY

OF DRAMATICK POESY,

BEING AN ANSWER TO
SIR ROBERT HOWARD'S PREFACE OF THE GREAT
FAVOURITE, OR THE DUKE OF LERMA.⁴

THE former edition of THE INDIAN EMPEROR being full of faults, which had escaped the printer, I have been willing to overlook this second with more care ; and though I could not allow myself so much time as was necessary, yet, by that little I have done, the press is freed from some errors

⁴ Our author married, probably about the year 1664, Lady Elizabeth Howard, sister of Sir Robert Howard, knt. and daughter of Thomas, the first Earl of Berkshire. In 1660, he had addressed some complimentary verses to Sir Robert, which were prefixed to his Poems, published in 8vo. in that year. In 1666 they appear to have been on good terms; Dryden having then addressed to him an encomiastick Epistle in prose, which is dated from Charle-ton, in Wiltshire, (the seat of the Earl of Berkshire,) and

which it had to answer for before. As for the more material faults of writing, which are properly mine, though I see many of them, I want leisure to amend them. It is enough for those who make one poem the business of their lives, to leave that correct : yet, excepting Virgil, I never met with any which was so in any language.

But while I was thus employed about this impression, there came to my hands a new printed play, called, THE GREAT FAVOURITE, OR THE

was prefixed to his ANNUS MIRABILIS, published in 8vo. in 1667, by Sir Robert Howard, who revised the sheets at the press, for the author, who was then in the country ; and in the EPISTLE he describes him as one whom he knew—not to be of the number of those, *qui carpere amicos suos judicium vocant*. In the ESSAY ON DRAMATICK POESY, as we have already seen, he speaks of Sir Robert Howard with great respect. That gentleman, however, having in 1668 published the foregoing reflections on the Essay, our author retorted in the following observations, which are found prefixed to the second edition of THE INDIAN EMPEROR, published in the same year. In many copies, however, of that edition, they are wanting ; nor were they reprinted in any other edition of that play which appeared in the life-time of the author : so that it should seem he was induced by good nature, or the interposition of friends, to suppress this witty and severe replication. One of the lampoons of the time gives a more invidious turn to this suppression ; and insinuates that he was compelled to retract. They lived afterwards probably in good correspondence together ; at least, it appears from an original letter of our author now before me, that towards the close of his life they were on friendly terms.

DUKE OF LERMA ; the author of which, a noble and most ingenious person, has done me the favour to make some observations and animadversions upon my DRAMATICK ESSAY. I must confess he might have better consulted his reputation, than by matching himself with so weak an adversary. But if his honour be diminished in the choice of his antagonist, it is sufficiently recompensed in the election of his cause : which being the weaker, in all appearance, as combating the received opinions of the best ancient and modern authors, will add to his glory, if he overcome, and to the opinion of his generosity, if he be vanquished : since he engages at so great odds, and, so like a cavalier, undertakes the protection of the weaker party. I have only to fear on my own behalf, that so good a cause as mine may not suffer by my ill management, or weak defence ; yet I cannot in honour but take the glove, when it is offered me : though I am only a champion by succession ; and no more able to defend the right of Aristotle and Horace, than an infant Dimock to maintain the title of a King.

For my own concernment of the controversy, it is so small, that I can easily be contented to be driven from a few notions of Dramatick Poesy ; especially by one, who has the reputation of understanding all things : and I might justly make that excuse for my yielding to him, which the Philosopher made to the Emperor,—*why should I offer to contend with him, who is master of more than twenty legions of arts and sciences ?* But I am

forced to fight, and therefore it will be no shame to be overcome.

Yet I am so much his servant, as not to meddle with any thing which does not concern me in his Preface; therefore, I leave the good sense and other excellencies of the first twenty lines to be considered by the criticks. As for the play of *THE DUKE OF LERMA*, having so much altered and beautified it, as he has done, it can justly belong to none but him. Indeed, they must be extreme ignorant as well as envious, who would rob him of that honour; for you see him putting in his claim to it, even in the first two lines:

Repulse upon repulse, like waves thrown back,
That slide to hang upon obdurate rocks.

After this, let detraction do its worst; for if this be not his, it deserves to be. For my part, I declare for distributive justice; and from this and what follows, he certainly deserves *those advantages which he acknowledges to have received from the opinion of sober men.*

In the next place, I must beg leave to observe his great address in courting the reader to his party. For intending to assault all poets, both ancient and modern, he discovers not his whole design at once, but seems only to aim at me, and attacks me on my weakest side, my defence of verse.

To begin with me,—he gives me the compellation of *The Author of a Dramatick Essay*, which is a little discourse in dialogue, for the most part borrowed from the observations of others: there-

fore, that I may not be wanting to him in civility, I return his compliment by calling him *The Author of THE DUKE OF LERMA.*

But (that I may pass over his salute) he takes notice of my great pains to prove rhyme as natural in a serious play, and more effectual than blank verse. Thus, indeed, I did state the question; but he tells me, *I pursue that which I call natural in a wrong application: for 'tis not the question whether rhyme or not rhyme be best or most natural for a serious subject, but what is nearest the nature of that it represents.*

If I have formerly mistaken the question, I must confess my ignorance so far, as to say I continue still in my mistake: but he ought to have proved that I mistook it; for it is yet but *gratis dictum*: I still shall think I have gained my point, if I can prove that rhyme is best or most natural for a serious subject. As for the question as he states it, whether rhyme be nearest the nature of what it represents, I wonder he should think me so ridiculous as to dispute whether prose or verse be nearest to ordinary conversation.

It still remains for him to prove his inference,—that, since verse is granted to be more remote than prose from ordinary conversation, therefore no serious plays ought to be writ in verse: and when he clearly makes that good, I will acknowledge his victory as absolute as he can desire it.

The question now is, which of us two has mistaken it; and if it appear I have not, the world will suspect *what gentleman that was, who was*

allowed to speak twice in parliament, because he had not yet spoken to the question ; and perhaps conclude it to be the same, who, as it is reported, maintained a contradiction in terminis, in the face of three hundred persons.

But to return to verse ; whether it be natural or not in plays, is a problem which is not demonstrable of either side. It is enough for me that he acknowledges he had rather read good verse than prose : for if all the enemies of verse will confess as much, I shall not need to prove that it is natural. I am satisfied, if it cause delight : for delight is the chief, if not the only, end of poesy : instruction can be admitted but in the second place ; for poesy only instructs as it delights. It is true, that to imitate well is a poet's work ; but to affect the soul, and excite the passions, and above all to move admiration, which is the delight of serious plays, a bare imitation will not serve. The converse, therefore, which a poet is to imitate, must be heightened with all the arts and ornaments of poesy ; and must be such, as, strictly considered, could never be supposed spoken by any without premeditation.

As for what he urges, that *a play will still be supposed to be a composition of several persons speaking extempore ; and that good verses are the hardest things which can be imagined to be spoken ;* I must crave leave to dissent from his opinion, as to the former part of it : for, if I am not deceived, a play is supposed to be the work of the poet, imitating or representing the conversation of several

persons; and this I think to be as clear, as he thinks the contrary.

But I will be bolder, and do not doubt to make it good, though a paradox, that one great reason why prose is not to be used in serious plays, is, because it is too near the nature of converse. There may be too great a likeness; as the most skilful painters affirm, that there may be too near a resemblance in a picture: to take every lineament and feature, is not to make an excellent piece; but to take so much only as will make a beautiful resemblance of the whole; and, with an ingenious flattery of nature, to heighten the beauties of some parts, and hide the deformities of the rest. For so says Horace:

Ut pictura poesis erit. -----

Hæc amat obscurum, vult hæc sub luce videri,

Judicis argutum quæ non formidat acumen.

----- *et quæ*

Desperat tractata nitescere posse, relinquit.

In BARTHOLOMEW FAIR, or the lowest kind of comedy, that degree of heightening is used, which is proper to set off that subject. It is true the author was not there to go out of prose, as he does in his higher arguments of comedy, THE FOX, and ALCHEMIST; yet he does so raise his matter in that prose, as to render it delightful; which he could never have performed, had he only said or done those very things that are daily spoken or practised in the Fair; for then the Fair itself would be as full of pleasure to an ingenious person as the

play ; which we manifestly see it is not. But he hath made an excellent lazar of it : the copy is of price, though the original be vile. You see in CATILINE and SEJANUS, where the argument is great, he sometimes ascends to verse,^s which shews he thought it not unnatural in serious plays : and had his genius been as proper for rhyme, as it was for humour, or had the age in which he lived attained to as much knowledge in verse as ours, it is probable he would have adorned those subjects with that kind of writing.

Thus prose, though the rightful prince, yet is by common consent deposed, as too weak for the government of serious plays ; and he failing, there now start up two competitors ; one the nearer in blood, which is blank verse ; the other more fit for the ends of government, which is rhyme. Blank verse is, indeed, the nearer prose, but he is blemished with the weakness of his predecessor. Rhyme (for I will deal clearly) has somewhat of the usurper in him ; but he is brave and generous, and his dominion pleasing. For this reason of delight, the Ancients (whom I will still believe as wise as those who so confidently correct them) wrote all their tragedies in verse, though they knew it most remote from conversation.

But I perceive I am falling into the danger of another rebuke from my opponent ; for when I

^s By *verse* our author here, and in some other places, means—rhyming couplets.

plead that the Ancients used verse, I prove not that they would have admitted rhyme, had it then been written. All I can say is only this; that it seems to have succeeded verse by the general consent of poets in all modern languages: for almost all their serious plays are written in it: which, though it be no demonstration that therefore they ought to be so, yet at least the practice first, and then the continuation of it, shews that it attained the end,—which was to please; and if that cannot be compassed here, I will be the first who shall lay it down: for I confess my chief endeavours are to delight the age in which I live. If the humour of this be for low comedy, small accidents, and raillery, I will force my genius to obey it, though with more reputation I could write in verse. I know I am not so fitted by nature to write comedy: I want that gaiety of humour which is required to it. My conversation is slow and dull, my humour saturnine and reserved: in short, I am none of those who endeavour to break jests in company, or make repartees. So that those who decry my comedies, do me no injury, except it be in point of profit: reputation in them is the last thing to which I shall pretend. I beg pardon for entertaining the reader with so ill a subject; but before I quit that argument, which was the cause of this digression, I cannot but take notice how I am corrected for my quotation of Seneca, in my defence of plays in verse. My words are these: “Our language is noble, full, and signi-

ficant; and I know not why he who is master of it, may not clothe ordinary things in it as decently as in the Latin, if he use the same diligence in his *choice of words*. One would think, *unlock a door*, was a thing as vulgar as could be spoken; yet Seneca could make it sound high and lofty in his Latin:

Reserate clusos regii postes laris."

But he says of me, *That being filled with the precedents of the Ancients, who writ their plays in verse, I commend the thing; declaring our language to be full, noble, and significant, and charging all defects upon the ill placing of words, which I prove by quoting Seneca loftily expressing such an ordinary thing as shutting a door.*

Here he manifestly mistakes; for I spoke not of the *placing*, but of the *choice* of words; for which I quoted that aphorism of Julius Cæsar:—*Delectus verborum est origo eloquentiæ*: but *delectus verborum* is no more Latin for the placing of words, than *reserate* is Latin for *shut the door*, as he interprets it, which I ignorantly construed *unlock* or *open* it.

He supposes I was highly affected with the sound of those words; and I suppose I may more justly imagine it of him; for if he had not been extremely satisfied with the sound, he would have minded the sense a little better.

But these are now to be no faults; for ten days after his book is published, and that his mistakes are grown so famous that they are come back to

him, he sends his *Errata* to be printed, and annexed to his play; and desires, that instead of *shutting* you would read *opening*; which, it seems, was the printer's fault. I wonder at his modesty, that he did not rather say it was Seneca's, or mine; and that in some authors, *reseat* was to *shut* as well as to *open*, as the word *barach*, say the learned, is both to *bless* and *curse*.

Well,—since it was the printer, he was a naughty man to commit the same mistake twice in six lines: I warrant you *delectus verborum* for *placing of words* was his mistake too, though the author forgot to tell him of it: if it were my book, I assure you I should. For those rascals ought to be the proxies of every gentleman author, and to be chastised for him, when he is not pleased to own an error. Yet since he has given the *Errata*, I wish he would have enlarged them only a few sheets more, and then he would have spared me the labour of an answer: for this cursed printer is so given to mistakes, that there is scarce a sentence in the Preface, without some false grammar, or hard sense in it; which will all be charged upon the poet, because he is so good-natured as to lay but three errors to the printer's account, and to take the rest upon himself, who is better able to support them. But he needs not apprehend that I should strictly examine those little faults, except I am called upon to do it: I shall return therefore to that quotation of Seneca, and answer, not to what he writes, but to what he means. I never intended

it as an argument, but only as an illustration of what I had said before concerning the election of words: and all he can charge me with is only this,—that if Seneca could make an ordinary thing sound well in Latin by the choice of words, the same, with the like care, might be performed in English. If it cannot, I have committed an error on the right hand, by commending too much the copiousness and well-sounding of our language; which I hope my countrymen will pardon me. At least the words which follow in my Dramatick Essay will plead somewhat in my behalf; for I say there, that this objection happens but seldom in a play; and then too either the meanness of the expression may be avoided, or shut out from the verse by breaking it in the midst.

But I have said too much in the defence of verse; for after all, it is a very indifferent thing to me, whether it obtain or not. I am content hereafter to be ordered by his rule, that is, to write it sometimes, because it pleases me; and so much the rather, because he has declared that it pleases him. But he has taken his last farewell of the Muses, and he has done it civilly, by honouring them with the name of *his long acquaintances*; which is a compliment they have scarce deserved from him. For my own part, I bear a share in the publick loss; and how emulous soever I may be of his fame and reputation, I cannot but give this testimony of his style,—that it is extreme poetical, even in oratory; his thoughts elevated

sometimes above common apprehension ; his notions politick and grave, and tending to the instruction of princes, and reformation of states ; that they are abundantly interlaced with variety of fancies, tropes, and figures, which the criticks have enviously branded with the name of obscurity and false grammar.

Well,—*he is now fettered in business of more unpleasant nature* : the Muses have lost him, but the commonwealth gains by it ; the corruption of a poet is the generation of a statesman.

He will not venture again into the civil wars of censure ; ubi - - - nullos habitura triumphos. If he had not told us he had left the Muses, we might have half suspected it by that word, *ubi*, which does not any way belong to them in that place ; the rest of the verse is indeed Lucan's ; but that *ubi*, I will answer for it, is his own. Yet he has another reason for this disgust of Poesy ; for he says immediately after, that *the manner of plays which are now in most esteem, is beyond his power to perform* : to perform the manner of a thing, I confess is new English to me. However, he condemns not the satisfaction of others ; but rather their unnecessary understanding, who, like Sancho Pança's doctor, prescribe too strictly to our appetites ; for, says he, *in the difference of tragedy and comedy, and of farce itself, there can be no determination but by the taste, nor in the manner of their composure.*

We shall see him now as great a critick as he was a poet ; and the reason why he excelled so much in poetry will be evident, for it will appear

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to have proceeded from the exactness of his judgment. *In the difference of tragedy, comedy, and farce itself, there can be no determination but by the taste.* I will not quarrel with the obscurity of his phrase, though I justly might; but beg his pardon if I do not rightly understand him. If he means, that there is no essential difference betwixt comedy, tragedy, and farce, but what is only made by the people's taste, which distinguishes one of them from the other, that is so manifest an error, that I need not lose time to contradict it. Were there neither judge, taste, nor opinion in the world, yet they would differ in their natures; for the action, character, and language of tragedy, would still be great and high; that of comedy lower and more familiar. Admiration would be the delight of one, and satire of the other.

I have but briefly touched upon these things, because, whatever his words are, I can scarce imagine, that *he who is always concerned for the true honour of reason, and would have no spurious issue fathered upon her*, should mean any thing so absurd as to affirm—that *there is no difference betwixt comedy and tragedy, but what is made by the taste only*: unless he would have us understand the comedies of my lord L.⁶, where the first act should be pottages, the second fricassees, &c. and the fifth a *chere entiere* of women.

⁶ I suppose, lord Lauderdale. He was not created a duke till 1672.

I rather guess he means, that betwixt one comedy or tragedy and another, there is no other difference but what is made by the liking or disliking of the audience. This is indeed a less error than the former, but yet it is a great one. The liking or disliking of the people gives the play the denomination of good or bad; but does not really make or constitute it such. To please the people ought to be the poet's aim, because plays are made for their delight; but it does not follow that they are always pleased with good plays, or that the plays which please them are always good. The humour of the people is now for comedy; therefore, in hope to please them, I write comedies rather than serious plays; and so far their taste prescribes to me: but it does not follow from that reason, that comedy is to be preferred before tragedy in its own nature; for that which is so in its own nature, cannot be otherwise; as a man cannot but be a rational creature: but the opinion of the people may alter, and in another age, or perhaps in this, serious plays may be set up above comedies.

This I think a sufficient answer: if it be not, he has provided me of an excuse. It seems, in his wisdom, he foresaw my weakness, and has found out this expedient for me;—*that it is not necessary for poets to study strict reason; since they are so used to a greater latitude than is allowed by that severe inquisition, that they must infringe their*

own jurisdiction, to profess themselves obliged to argue well.

I am obliged to him for discovering to me this back-door; but I am not yet resolved on my retreat: for I am of opinion that they cannot be good poets, who are not accustomed to argue well. False reasonings and colours of speech are the certain marks of one who does not understand the stage; for moral truth is the mistress of the poet, as much as of the philosopher. Poesy must resemble natural truth, but it must be ethical. Indeed the poet dresses truth, and adorns nature, but does not alter them:

Ficta voluptatis causâ sint proxima veris.

Therefore, that is not the best poesy, which resembles notions of things that are not, to things that are: though the fancy may be great, and the words flowing, yet the soul is but half satisfied when there is not truth in the foundation. This is that which makes Virgil be preferred before the rest of poets. In variety of fancy and sweetness of expression, you see Ovid far above him; for Virgil rejected many of those things which Ovid wrote. *A great wit's great work is to refuse*, as my worthy friend, Sir John Berkenhead, has ingeniously expressed it. You rarely meet with any thing in Virgil but truth, which therefore leaves the strongest impression of pleasure in the soul. This I thought myself obliged to say in behalf of Poesy; and to

declare, though it be against myself, that when poets do not argue well, the defect is in the workmen, not in the art.

And now I come to the boldest part of his discourse, wherein he attacks not me, but all the ancients and moderns; and undermines, as he thinks, the very foundations on which Dramatick Poesy is built. I could wish he would have declined that envy which must of necessity follow such an undertaking, and contented himself with triumphing over me in my opinions of verse, which I will never hereafter dispute with him; but he must pardon me, if I have that veneration for Aristotle, Horace, Ben Jonson, and Corneille, that I dare not serve him in such a cause, and against such heroes, but rather fight under their protection, as Homer reports of little Teucer, who shot the Trojans from under the large buckler of Ajax Telamon:

Στῆ δ' ἄρ' ὑπ' Αἰῶλ' ἄσπερ Τελαμωνιάδου.

He stood beneath his brother's ample shield;
And cover'd there, shot death through all the field.

The words of my noble adversary are these:

But if we examine the general rules laid down for plays by strict reason, we shall find the errours equally gross; for the great foundation which is laid to build upon, is nothing, as it is generally stated, as will appear upon the examination of the particulars.

These particulars, in due time, shall be examined. In the mean while, let us consider what

this great foundation is, which he says is nothing, as it is generally stated. I never heard of any other foundation of Dramatick Poesy than the imitation of nature; neither was there ever pretended any other by the ancients, or moderns, or me, who endeavour to follow them in that rule. This I have plainly said in my definition of a play; that it is a just and lively image of human nature, &c. Thus the foundation, as it is generally stated, will stand sure, if this definition of a play be true; if it be not, he ought to have made his exception against it, by proving that a play is not an imitation of nature, but somewhat else which he is pleased to think it.

But it is very plain, that he has mistaken the foundation for that which is built upon it, though not immediately. For the direct and immediate consequence is this; if nature be to be imitated, then there is a rule for imitating nature rightly; otherwise there may be an end, and no means conducing to it. Hitherto I have proceeded by demonstration; but as our divines,—when they have proved a Deity, because there is order, and have inferred that this Deity ought to be worshipped,—differ afterwards in the manner of the worship; so, having laid down—that nature is to be imitated, and that proposition proving the next,—that then there are means which conduce to the imitating of nature, I dare proceed no farther positively; but have only laid down some opinions of the ancients and moderns, and of my own, as

means which they used, and which I thought probable for the attaining of that end. Those means are the same which my antagonist calls the foundations,—how properly, the world may judge; and to prove that this is his meaning, he clears it immediately to you, by enumerating those rules or propositions against which he makes his particular exceptions,—as namely, those of time, and place, in these words: *First, we are told the plot should not be so ridiculously contrived, as to crowd two several countries into one stage; secondly, to cramp the accidents of many years or days into the representation of two hours and an half; and lastly, a conclusion drawn, that the only remaining dispute is, concerning time, whether it should be contained in twelve or twenty-four hours; and the place to be limited to that spot of ground where the play is supposed to begin: and this is called nearest nature; for that is concluded most natural, which is most probable, and nearest to that which it presents.*

Thus he has only made a small mistake—of the means conducing to the end, for the end itself; and of the superstructure for the foundation. But he proceeds: *To shew, therefore, upon what ill grounds they dictate laws for Dramatick Poesy, &c.* He is here pleased to charge me with being magisterial, as he has done in many other places of his Preface. Therefore in vindication of myself, I must crave leave to say, that my whole discourse was sceptical, according to that way of reasoning which was used by Socrates, Plato, and all the

Academicks of old, which Tully and the best of the ancients followed, and which is imitated by the modest inquisitions of the Royal Society. That it is so, not only the name will shew, which is, *An Essay*, but the frame and composition of the work. You see, it is a dialogue sustained by persons of several opinions, all of them left doubtful, to be determined by the readers in general; and more particularly deferred to the accurate judgment of my lord Buckhurst, to whom I made a dedication of my book. These are my words in my Epistle, speaking of the persons whom I introduced in my dialogue: "It is true, they differed in their
" opinions, as it is probable they would; neither
" do I take upon me to reconcile, but to relate
" them, leaving your lordship to decide it in favour
" of that part which you shall judge most reason-
" able." And after that, in my Advertisement to the Reader, I said this: "The drift of the ensuing
" discourse is chiefly to vindicate the honour of
" our English writers from the censure of those
" who unjustly prefer the French before them.
" This I intimate, lest any should think me so
" exceeding vain, as to teach others an art which
" they understand much better than myself." But this is more than necessary to clear my modesty in that point; and I am very confident that there is scarce any man who has lost so much time, as to read that trifle, but will be my compurgator as to that arrogance whereof I am accused. The truth is, if I had been naturally guilty of so much

vanity as to dictate my opinions, yet I do not find that the character of a positive or self-conceited person⁷ is of such advantage to any in this age, that I should labour to be publickly admitted of that order.

But I am not now to defend my own cause, when that of all the ancients and moderns is in question. For this gentleman, who accuses me of arrogance, has taken a course not to be taxed with the other extreme of modesty. Those propositions which are laid down in my discourse, as helps to the better imitation of nature, are not mine, (as I have said,) nor were ever pretended so to be, but derived from the authority of Aristotle and Horace, and from the rules and examples of Ben Jonson and Corneille. These are the men with whom properly he contends, and against *whom he will endeavour to make it evident, that there is no such thing as what they all pretend.*

His argument against the unities of place and time, is this: *That it is as impossible for one stage to present two rooms or houses truly, as two countries or kingdoms; and as impossible that five hours or twenty-four hours should be two hours, as that a thousand hours or years should be less than what they are, or the greatest part of time to be comprehended*

⁷ Sir Robert Howard's own character. He is supposed to have been ridiculed under the character of Sir *Positive Atall*, in Shadwell's *SULLEN LOVERS*, represented and published in the same year in which this piece was written.

in the less : for all of them being impossible, they are none of them nearest the truth or nature of what they present ; for impossibilities are all equal, and admit of no degree.

This argument is so scattered into parts, that it can scarce be united into a syllogism ; yet, in obedience to him, *I will abbreviate* and comprehend as much of it as I can in few words, that my answer to it may be more perspicuous. I conceive his meaning to be what follows, as to the unity of place : (if I mistake, I beg his pardon, professing it is not out of any design to play the *Argumentative Poet*.) If one stage cannot properly present two rooms or houses, much less two countries or kingdoms, then there can be no unity of place ; but one stage cannot properly perform this : therefore there can be no unity of place.

I plainly deny his minor proposition ; the force of which, if I mistake not, depends on this ; that the stage being one place cannot be two. This, indeed, is as great a secret, as that we are all mortal ;⁸ but to require it with another, I must crave leave to tell him, that though the stage

⁸ There is here, I believe, a covert allusion to the character in Shadwell's play already mentioned, who in the first scene, addressing Sandford, says, " — betwixt you and I, let me tell you, *we are all mortal* ;" in which *wise* remark the author probably had in view Sir Robert Howard's poem "Against the Fear of Death." See particularly the opening and concluding lines. Nichols's COLLECTION, ii. 330.

cannot be two places, yet it may properly represent them, successively, or at several times. His argument is indeed no more than a mere fallacy, which will evidently appear, when we distinguish place, as it relates to plays, into real and imaginary. The real place is that theatre, or piece of ground, on which the play is acted. The imaginary, that house, town, or country, where the action of the drama is supposed to be ; or more plainly, where the scene of the play is laid. Let us now apply this to that Herculean argument, *which, if strictly and duly weighed, is to make it evident, that there is no such thing as what they all pretend.* It is impossible, he says, for one stage to present two rooms or houses. I answer, it is neither impossible, nor improper, for one real place to represent two or more imaginary places, so it be done successively ; which in other words is no more than this,—that the imagination of the audience, aided by the words of the poet, and painted scenes, may suppose the stage to be sometimes one place, sometimes another ; now a garden, or wood, and immediately a camp : which, I appeal to every man's imagination, if it be not true. Neither the ancients nor moderns, as much fools as he is pleased to think them, ever asserted that they could make one place two ; but they might hope, by the good leave of this author, that the change of a scene might lead the imagination to suppose the place altered : so that he cannot fasten those absurdities upon this scene of a play, or

imaginary place of action, that it is one place, and yet two. And this being so clearly proved, that it is past any shew of a reasonable denial, it will not be hard to destroy that other part of his argument which depends upon it; namely, that it is as impossible for a stage to represent two rooms or houses, as two countries or kingdoms; for his reason is already overthrown, which was, because both were alike impossible. This is manifestly otherwise; for it is proved that a stage may properly represent two rooms or houses; for the imagination being judge of what is represented, will in reason be less choked with the appearance of two rooms in the same house, or two houses in the same city, than with two distant cities in the same country, or two remote countries in the same universe. Imagination in a man or reasonable creature, is supposed to participate of reason; and when that governs, as it does in the belief of fiction, reason is not destroyed, but misled, or blinded: *that* can prescribe to the reason, during the time of the representation, somewhat like a weak belief of what it sees and hears; and reason suffers itself to be so hood-winked, that it may better enjoy the pleasures of the fiction. But it is never so wholly made a captive, as to be drawn headlong into a persuasion of those things which are most remote from probability. It is in that case a free-born subject, not a slave; it will contribute willingly its assent, as far as it sees convenient, but will not be forced. Now there is a greater vicinity in nature betwixt two rooms than

betwixt two houses, betwixt two houses than betwixt two cities, and so of the rest; Reason therefore can sooner be led by Imagination to step from one room into another, than to walk to two distant houses, and yet rather to go thither, than to fly like a witch through the air, and be hurried from one region to another. Fancy and Reason go hand in hand; the first cannot leave the last behind; and though Fancy, when it sees the wide gulph, would venture over as the nimbler, yet it is withheld by Reason, which will refuse to take the leap, when the distance over it appears too large. If Ben Jonson himself will remove the scene from Rome into Tuscany in the same act, and from thence return to Rome, in the scene which immediately follows, Reason will consider there is no proportionable allowance of time to perform the journey, and therefore will chuse to stay at home. So then, the less change of place there is, the less time is taken up in transporting the persons of the drama, with analogy to reason; and in that analogy, or resemblance of fiction to truth, consists the excellency of the play.

For what else concerns the unity of place, I have already given my opinion of it in my Essay;—that there is a latitude to be allowed to it,—as several places in the same town or city, or places adjacent to each other in the same country, which may all be comprehended under the larger denomination of one place; yet with this restriction, that the nearer and fewer those imaginary places are, the greater resemblance they will have to

truth ; and reason, which cannot make them one, will be more easily led to suppose them so.

What has been said of the unity of place, may easily be applied to that of time. I grant it to be impossible, that the greater part of time should be comprehended in the less, that twenty-four hours should be crowded into three: but there is no necessity of that supposition.— For as *place*, so *time* relating to a play, is either imaginary or real: the real is comprehended in those three hours, more or less, in the space of which the play is represented; the imaginary is that which is supposed to be taken up in the representation, as twenty-four hours more or less. Now no man ever could suppose that twenty-four real hours could be included in the space of three: but where is the absurdity of affirming that the feigned business of twenty-four imagined hours may not more naturally be represented in the compass of three real hours, than the like feigned business of twenty-four years in the same proportion of real time? For the proportions are always real, and much nearer, by his permission, of twenty-four to three, than of four thousand to it.*

* Our author has here stated, with great strength and acuteness, all that can be urged in favour of observing the unities of time and place. Dr. Johnson's masterly refutation of this argument is as follows:

“ The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at Alexandria, and the next at Rome, supposes, that when the play opens the spectator really

I am almost fearful of illustrating any thing by similitude, lest he should confute it for an argument; yet I think the comparison of a glass will discover very aptly the fallacy of his argument, who imagines himself at Alexandria, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Antony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Cæsar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth; and from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field.

“The truth is, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players. They come to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that complete a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first Athens, and then Sicily, which was always known to be neither Sicily nor Athens, but a modern theatre.

“By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended: the time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much of the action

both concerning time and place. The strength of his reason depends on this,—that the less cannot comprehend the greater. I have already answered, that we need not suppose it does: I say not that the less can comprehend the greater, but only that it may represent it: as in a glass or mirror of half a yard diameter, a whole room and many persons in it may be seen at once; not that it can comprehend that room or those persons, but that it represents them to the sight.

But *the Author of THE DUKE OF LERMA* is to be excused for his declaring against the unity of time; for, if I be not much mistaken, he is an interested person, the time of that play taking up so many years as the favour of the Duke of Lerma

as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first act, preparations for war against Mithridates are represented to be made in Rome, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in Pontus; we know that there is neither war, nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in Rome nor Pontus; that neither Mithridates nor Lucullus are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions; and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first, if it be so connected with it, that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation." Preface to Shakspeare's Plays.

continued ; nay the second and third act including all the time of his prosperity, which was a great part of the reign of Philip the Third : for in the beginning of the second act he was not yet a favourite, and before the end of the third, was in disgrace. I say not this with the least design of limiting the stage too servilely to twenty-four hours, however he be pleased to tax me with dogmatizing in that point. In my dialogue, as I before hinted, several persons maintained their several opinions. One of them, indeed, who supported the cause of the French poesy, said, how strict they were in that particular ; but he who answered in behalf of our nation, was willing to give more latitude to the rule ; and cites the words of Corneille himself, complaining against the severity of it, and observing what beauties it banished from the stage.* In few words, my own opinion is this,—(and I willingly submit it to my adversary, when he will please impartially to consider it,) that the imaginary time of every play ought to be contrived into as narrow a compass as the nature of the plot, the quality of the persons, and variety of accidents will allow. In comedy I would not exceed twenty-four or thirty hours : for the plot, accidents, and persons of comedy are small, and may be naturally turned in a little compass : but in tragedy the design is weighty, and the persons great ; therefore there will naturally be required a greater space of time in which

* See p. 93.

to move them. And this though Ben Jonson has not told us, yet it is manifestly his opinion: for you see that to his comedies he allows generally but twenty-four hours; to his two tragedies, SEJANUS and CATILINE, a much larger time; though he draws both of them into as narrow a compass as he can; for he shews you only the latter end of Sejanus his favour, and the conspiracy of Catiline already ripe, and just breaking out into action.

But as it is an error on the one side, to make too great a disproportion betwixt the imaginary time of the play, and the real time of its representation; so on the other side, it is an oversight to compress the accidents of a play into a narrower compass than that in which they could naturally be produced. Of this last error the French are seldom guilty, because the thinness of their plots prevents them from it; but few Englishmen, except Ben Jonson, have ever made a plot with a variety of design in it, included in twenty-four hours, which was altogether natural. For this reason, I prefer THE SILENT WOMAN before all other plays, I think justly, as I do its author, in judgment, above all other poets. Yet of the two, I think that error the most pardonable, which in too strait a compass crowds together many accidents; since it produces more variety, and consequently more pleasure to the audience; and because the nearness of proportion betwixt the imaginary and real time, does speciously cover the compression of the accidents.

Thus I have endeavoured to answer the meaning of his argument; for as he drew it, I humbly conceive that it was none; as will appear by his proposition, and the proof of it. His proposition was this:

If strictly and duly weighed, it is as impossible for one stage to present two rooms or houses, as two countries or kingdoms, &c. And his proof this: *For all being impossible, they are none of them nearest the truth or nature of what they present.*

Here you see, instead of proof or reason, there is only *petitio principii*. For in plain words, his sense is this: two things are as impossible as one another, because they are both equally impossible. But he takes those two things to be granted as impossible which he ought to have proved such, before he had proceeded to prove them equally impossible: he should have made out first, that it was impossible for one stage to represent two houses, and then have gone forward to prove that it was as equally impossible for a stage to present two houses, as two countries.

After all this, the very absurdity to which he would reduce me, is none at all: for he only drives at this;—that if his argument be true, I must then acknowledge that there are degrees in impossibilities, which I easily grant him without dispute: and if I mistake not, Aristotle and the School are of my opinion. For there are some things which are absolutely impossible, and others which are only so *ex parte*; as it is absolutely impossible for a thing *to be*, and not *to be*, at the same time;

but for a stone to move naturally upward, is only impossible *ex parte materiæ*; but it is not impossible for the first mover to alter the nature of it.

His last assault, like that of a Frenchman, is most feeble: for whereas I have observed, that none have been violent against verse, but such only as have not attempted it, or have succeeded ill in their attempt, he will needs, according to his usual custom, improve my observation to an argument, that he might have the glory to confute it. But I lay my observation at his feet, as I do my pen, which I have often employed willingly in his deserved commendations, and now most unwillingly against his judgment. For his person and parts, I honour them as much as any man living, and have had so many particular obligations to him, that I should be very ungrateful, if I did not acknowledge them to the world. But I gave not the first occasion of this difference in opinions. In my Epistle Dedicatory before my RIVAL LADIES, I have said somewhat in behalf of verse, which he was pleased to answer in his Preface to his plays: that occasioned my reply in my Essay; and that reply begot this rejoinder of his in his Preface to THE DUKE OF LERMA. But as I was the last who took up arms, I will be the first to lay them down. For what I have here written, I submit it wholly to him; and if I do not hereafter answer what may be objected against this paper, I hope the world will not impute it to any other reason, than only the due respect which I have for so noble an opponent.

PREFACE
TO THE
MOCK ASTROLOGER:

FIRST PRINTED IN QUARTO, IN 1671.

“ This Preface,” says Dr. Johnson, “ seems very elaborately written, and contains many just remarks on the Fathers of the English drama. Shakspeare’s plots, he says, are in the hundred Novels of Cinthio; those of Beaumont and Fletcher in Spanish Stories; Jonson alone made them for himself. His criticisms upon tragedy, comedy, and farce, are judicious and profound. He endeavours to defend the immorality of some of his comedies by the example of former writers; which is only to say, that he was not the first, nor perhaps the greatest, offender.” Life of DRYDEN.

PREFACE
TO THE
MOCK ASTROLOGER.

I HAD thought, Reader, in this Preface, to have written somewhat concerning the difference betwixt the plays of our age, and those of our predecessors, on the English stage: to have shewn in what parts of Dramatick Poesy we were excelled by Ben Jonson, I mean, humour, and contrivance of comedy; and in what we may justly claim precedence of Shakspeare and Fletcher, namely, in heroick plays; but this design I have waved on second considerations; at least deferred it till I publish *THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA*, where the discourse will be more proper. I had also prepared to treat of the improvement of our language since Fletcher's and Jonson's days, and consequently of our refining the courtship, raillery, and conversation of plays: but as I am willing to decline that envy which I should draw on myself from some old opiniatre judges of the stage, so likewise I am pressed in time so much, that I have not leisure, at present, to go through with it. Neither, indeed, do I value a reputation gained

from comedy, so far as to concern myself about it, any more than I needs must in my own defence : for I think it, in its own nature, inferior to all sorts of dramattick writing. Low comedy especially requires, on the writer's part, much of conversation with the vulgar, and much of ill nature in the observation of their follies. But let all men please themselves according to their several tastes : that which is not pleasant to me, may be to others who judge better. And, to prevent an accusation from my enemies, I am sometimes ready to imagine, that my disgust of low comedy proceeds not so much from my judgment as from my temper ; which is the reason why I so seldom write it ; and that when I succeed in it, (I mean so far as to please the audience,) yet I am nothing satisfied with what I have done ; but am often vexed to hear the people laugh, and clap, as they perpetually do, where I intended them no jest ; while they let pass the better things without taking notice of them. Yet even this confirms me in my opinion of slighting popular applause, and of contemning that approbation which those very people give, equally with me, to the zany of a mountebank ; or to the appearance of an antick on the theatre, without wit on the poet's part, or any occasion of laughter from the actor, besides the ridiculousness of his habit and his grimaces.²

² Our author probably here alludes to Mr. James Noke, (corruptly called by his contemporaries *Nokes*,) who in the preceding year, (1670) by a fantastick dress and ridiculous

But I have descended before I was aware, from comedy to farce; which consists principally of grimaces. That I admire not any comedy equally with tragedy, is, perhaps, from the sullenness of my humour; but that I detest those farces, which are now the most frequent entertainments of the stage, I am sure I have reason on my side. Comedy consists, though of low persons, yet of natural actions and characters; I mean such humours, adventures, and designs, as are to be found and met with in the world. Farce, on the other side, consists of forced humours, and unnatural events. Comedy presents us with the imperfections of human nature; farce entertains us with what is monstrous and chimerical: the one causes laughter in those who can judge of men and manners, by the lively representation of their folly or corruption; the other produces the same effect in those who can judge of neither, and that only by its extravagancies. The first works on the judgment and fancy; the latter on the fancy only: there is more of satisfaction in the former kind of laughter, and in the latter more of scorn. But, how it happens, that an impossible adventure should cause our mirth, I cannot so easily imagine. Something there may be in the oddness of it, because on the stage it is the com-
grimaces, had gained great applause in the part of Sir Arthur Addle, in the play of Sir SALOMON SINGLE, written by John Caryl, Esq. See Downes's ROSCIUS ANGLICANUS, 8vo. 1708, p. 29.

mon effect of things unexpected to surprise us into a delight; and that is to be ascribed to the strange appetite, as I may call it, of the fancy; which, like that of a longing woman, often runs out into the most extravagant desires, and is better satisfied sometimes with loam, or with the rinds of trees, than with the wholesome nourishments of life. In short, there is the same difference betwixt farce and comedy, as betwixt an empirick and a true physician: both of them may attain their ends, but what the one performs by hazard, the other does by skill. And as the artist is often unsuccessful, while the mountebank succeeds,—so farces more commonly take the people than comedies. For to write unnatural things, is the most probable way of pleasing them, who understand not nature; and a true poet often misses of applause, because he cannot debase himself to write so ill as to please his audience.

After all, it is to be acknowledged, that most of those comedies which have been lately written, have been allied too much to farce: and this must of necessity fall out, till we forbear the translation of French plays: for their poets, wanting judgment to make or to maintain true characters, strive to cover their defects with ridiculous figures and grimaces. While I say this, I accuse myself as well as others: and this very play would rise up in judgment against me, if I would defend all things I have written to be natural: but I confess I have given too much to the people in it, and am

ashamed for them as well as for myself, that I have pleased them at so cheap a rate. Not that there is any thing here, which I would not defend to an ill-natured judge ; (for I despise their censures, who I am sure would write worse on the same subject :) but because I love to deal clearly and plainly, and to speak of my own faults with more criticism, than I would of another poet's. Yet I think it no vanity to say—that this comedy has as much of entertainment in it as many others which have been lately written : and, if I find my own errors in it, I am able at the same time to arraign all my contemporaries for greater. As I pretend not that I can write humour, so none of them can reasonably pretend to have written it as they ought. Jonson was the only man of all ages and nations, who has performed it well ; and that but in three or four of his comedies : the rest are but a *crambe bis cocta* ; the same humours a little varied, and written worse. Neither was it more allowable in him, than it is in our present poets, to represent the follies of particular persons ; of which many have accused him. *Parcere personis, dicere de vitiis*, is the rule of plays. And Horace tells you, that the old comedy amongst the Grecians was silenced for the too great liberties of the poets:

————— *in vitium libertas excidit et vim*
Dignam lege regi: lex est accepta, chorusque
Turpiter obtinuit, sublato jure nocendi.

Of which he gives you the reason in another place: where, having given the precept—

Neve immunda crepent, ignominiosaque dicta,—

he immediately subjoins,

Offenduntur enim quibus est equus, et pater, et res.

But Ben Jonson is to be admired for many excellencies; and can be taxed with fewer failings than any English poet. I know I have been accused as an enemy of his writings; but without any other reason than that I do not admire him blindly, and without looking into his imperfections. For why should he only be exempted from those frailties, from which Homer and Virgil are not free? Or why should there be any *ipse dixit* in our poetry, any more than there is in our philosophy? I admire and applaud him where I ought: those who do more, do but value themselves in their admiration of him; and by telling you they extol Ben Jonson's way, would insinuate to you that they can practise it. For my part, I declare that I want judgment to imitate him; and should think it a great impudence in myself to attempt it. To make men appear pleasantly ridiculous on the stage was, as I have said, his talent; and in this he needed not the acumen of wit, but that of judgment. For the characters and representations of folly are only the effects of observation; and observation is an effect of judgment. Some ingenious men, for whom I have a particular esteem, have thought I have much injured Ben Jonson,

when I have not allowed his wit to be extraordinary ; but they confound the notion of what is witty, with what is pleasant. That Ben Jonson's plays were pleasant, he must want reason who denies ; but that pleasantness was not properly wit, or the sharpness of conceit, but the natural imitation of folly : which I confess to be excellent in its kind, but not to be of that kind which they pretend. Yet if we will believe Quintilian in his chapter *de movendo risu*, he gives his opinion of both in these following words : *Stulta reprehendere facillimum est ; nam per se sunt ridicula, et à derisu non procul abest risus : sed rem urbanam facit aliqua ex nobis adjectio.*

And some perhaps would be apt to say of Jonson, as it was said of Demosthenes,—*non displicuisse illi jocos, sed non contigisse.* I will not deny but that I approve most the mixed way of comedy ; that which is neither all wit, nor all humour, but the result of both : neither so little of humour as Fletcher shews, nor so little of love and wit, as Jonson : neither all cheat, with which the best plays of the one are filled, nor all adventure, which is the common practice of the other. I would have the characters well chosen, and kept distant from interfering with each other ; which is more than Fletcher or Shakspeare⁴ did : but I would have more of the *urbana, venusta, salsa,*

⁴ This censure of Shakspeare is wholly unfounded. His nice distinction of character is one of his acknowledged merits ; as our author himself, in a subsequent Essay, allows.

faceta, and the rest which Quintilian reckons up as the ornaments of wit ; and these are extremely wanting in Ben Jonson. As for repartee in particular, as it is the very soul of conversation, so it is the greatest grace of comedy, where it is proper to the characters. There may be much of acuteness in a thing well said ; but there is more in a quick reply : *sunt enim longè venustiora omnia in respondendo quàm in provocando*. Of one thing I am sure, that no man ever will decry wit, but he who despairs of it himself ; and who has no other quarrel to it but that which the fox had to the grapes. Yet, as Mr. Cowley (who had a greater portion of it than any man I know) tells us in his *Character of Wit*,—rather than all wit, let there be none. I think there is no folly so great in any poet of our age, as the superfluity and waste of wit was in some of our predecessors : particularly we may say of Fletcher and of Shakspeare, what was said of Ovid, *In omni ejus ingenio, facilius quod rejici, quàm quodadjici potest, invenies*: the contrary of which was true in Virgil, and our incomparable Jonson.

Some enemies of repartee have observed to us, that there is a great latitude in their characters, which are made to speak it ; and that it is easier to write wit than humour ; because in the characters of humour, the poet is confined to make the person speak what is only proper to it ; whereas all kind of wit is proper in the character of a witty person. But, by their favour, there are as different characters in wit as in folly. Neither is all kind of wit proper in the mouth of every inge-

nious person. A witty coward, and a witty brave, must speak differently. Falstaff and the Liar^s speak not like Don John in *THE CHANCES*, and Valentine in *WIT WITHOUT MONEY*; and Jonson's Truewit in *THE SILENT WOMAN* is a character different from all of them. Yet it appears, that this one character of wit was more difficult to the author, than all his images of humour in the play; for those he could describe and manage from his observation of men; this he has taken, at least a part of it, from books: witness the speeches in the first act, translated *verbatim* out of Ovid *DE ARTE AMANDI*;—to omit what afterwards he borrowed from the sixth satire of Juvenal against women.

However, if I should grant, that there were a greater latitude in characters of wit, than in those of humour, yet that latitude would be of small advantage to such poets who have too narrow an imagination to write it. And to entertain an audience perpetually with humour, is to carry them from the conversation of gentlemen, and treat them with the follies and extravagancies of Bedlam.

I find I have launched out farther than I intended in the beginning of this Preface; and that, in the heat of writing, I have touched at something which I thought to have avoided. It is time now to draw homeward; and to think

^s A character in a play already mentioned. See p. 83.

rather of defending myself, than assaulting others. I have already acknowledged that this play is far from perfect : but I do not think myself obliged to discover the imperfections of it to my adversaries, any more than a guilty person is bound to accuse himself before his judges. It is charged upon me, that I make debauched persons (such as they say my Astrologer and Gamester are) my protagonists, or the chief persons of the drama, and that I make them happy in the conclusion of my play ; against the law of comedy, which is to reward virtue, and punish vice. I answer first, that I know no such law to have been constantly observed in comedy, either by the ancient or modern poets. Chærea is made happy in *THE EUNUCH*, after having deflowered a virgin ; and Terence generally does the same through all his plays ; where you perpetually see, not only debauched young men enjoy their mistresses, but even the courtezans themselves rewarded and honoured in the catastrophe. The same may be observed in Plautus almost every where. Ben Jonson himself, after whom I may be proud to err, has given me more than once the example of it. That in *THE ALCHEMIST* is notorious, where Face, after having contrived and carried on the great cozenage of the play, and continued in it, without repentance, to the last, is not only forgiven by his master, but enriched, by his consent, with the spoils of those whom he had cheated. And, which is more,—his master himself, a grave man, and a

widower, is introduced taking his man's counsel, debauching the widow first, in hope to marry her afterward. In *THE SILENT WOMAN*, Dauphine (who with the other two gentlemen, is of the same character with my Celadon in *THE MAIDEN QUEEN*, and with Wildblood in this) professes himself in love with all the Collegiate ladies; and they likewise are all of the same character with each other, excepting only Madam Otter, who has something singular: yet this naughty Dauphine is crowned in the end with the possession of his uncle's estate, and with the hopes of enjoying all his mistresses. And his friend Mr. Truewit (the best character of a gentleman which Ben Jonson ever made) is not ashamed to pimp for him. As for Beaumont and Fletcher, I need not alledge examples out of them; for that were to quote almost all their comedies.

But now it will be objected, that I patronize vice by the authority of former poets, and extenuate my own faults by recrimination. I answer, that as I defend myself by their example, so that example I defend by reason, and by the end of all dramattick poesy. In the first place, therefore, give me leave to shew you their mistake, who have accused me. They have not distinguished as they ought, betwixt the rules of tragedy and comedy. In tragedy, where the actions and persons are great, and the crimes horrid, the laws of justice are more strictly to be observed; and examples of punishment to be made, to deter mankind from

the pursuit of vice. Faults of this kind have been rare amongst the ancient poets; for they have punished in Oedipus, and in his posterity, the sin which he knew not he had committed. Medea is the only example I remember at present, who escapes from punishment after murder. Thus tragedy fulfils one great part of its institution; which is by example to instruct. But in comedy it is not so; for the chief end of it is divertisement and delight: and that so much, that it is disputed, I think, by Heinsius, before Horace his *Art of Poetry*, whether instruction be any part of its employment. At least I am sure it can be but its secondary end; for the business of the poet is to make you laugh: when he writes humour, he makes folly ridiculous; when wit, he moves you, if not always to laughter, yet to a pleasure that is more noble. And if he works a cure on folly, and the small imperfections in mankind, by exposing them to publick view, that cure is not performed by an immediate operation: for it works first on the ill-nature of the audience; they are moved to laugh by the representation of deformity; and the shame of that laughter teaches us to amend what is ridiculous in our manners. This being then established,—that the first end of comedy is delight, and instruction only the second, it may reasonably be inferred, that comedy is not so much obliged to the punishment of the faults which it represents, as tragedy. For the persons in comedy are of a lower quality, the action is

little, and the faults and vices are but the sallies of youth, and the frailties of human nature, and not premeditated crimes: such to which all men are obnoxious, not such as are attempted only by few, and those abandoned to all sense of virtue; such as move pity and commiseration, not detestation and horror; such, in short, as may be forgiven, not such as must of necessity be punished. But, lest any man should think that I write this to make libertinism amiable, or that I cared not⁶ to debase the end and institution of comedy, so I might thereby maintain my own errors, and those of better poets, I must farther declare, both for them and for myself, that we make not vicious persons happy, but only as heaven makes sinners so,—that is, by reclaiming them first from vice; for so it is to be supposed they are, when they resolve to marry; for then enjoying what they desire in one, they cease to pursue the love of many. So Chærea is made happy in Terence, in marrying her whom he had deflowered; and so are Wildblood, and the Astrologer, in this play.

There is another crime with which I am charged, at which I am yet much less concerned, because it does not relate to my manners, as the former did, but only to my reputation as a poet; a name of which I assure the reader I am nothing proud, and therefore cannot be very solicitous to defend

⁶ *I cared not* is here used in the sense of—*I scrupled not*.

it. I am taxed with stealing all my plays, and that by some who should be the last men from whom I would steal any part of them. There is one answer which I will not make; but it has been made for me by him to whose grace and patronage I owe all things,—

Et spes et ratio studiorum in Casare tantum—

and without whose command they should no longer be troubled with any thing of mine;—that he only desired, that they who accused me of theft, would always steal him plays like mine. But though I have reason to be proud of this defence, yet I should wave it, because I have a worse opinion of my own comedies, than any of my enemies can have. It is true, that wherever I have liked any story in a romance, novel, or foreign play, I have made no difficulty, nor ever shall, to take the foundation of it, to build it up, and to make it proper for the English stage. And I will be so vain to say—it has lost nothing in my hands; but it always cost me so much trouble to heighten it for our theatre, which is incomparably more curious in all the ornaments of dramatick poesy, than the French or Spanish, that when I had finished my play, it was like the hulk of Sir Francis Drake, so strangely altered, that there scarce remained any plank of the timber which

⁷ King Charles the Second. His Majesty is known to have been fond of theatrical entertainments, and sometimes condescended so far as to suggest subjects for plays to the poets of the time.

first built it. To witness this, I need go no farther than this play. It was first Spanish, and called *EL ASTROLOGO FINGIDO*; then made French by the younger Corneille; and is now translated into English, and in print, under the name of *THE FEIGNED ASTROLOGER*.^s What I have performed in this, will best appear, by comparing it with those: you will see that I have rejected some adventures which I judged were not divertising; that I have heightened those which I have chosen; and that I have added others which were neither in the French nor Spanish. And besides you will easily discover, that the walk of the Astrologer is the least considerable in my play; for the design of it turns more on the parts of Wildblood and Jacintha, who are the chief persons in it. I have farther to add, that I seldom use the wit and language of any romance or play which I undertake to alter; because my own invention (as bad as it is) can furnish me with nothing so dull as what is there. Those who have called Virgil, Terence, and Tasso, plagiaries, though they much injured them, had yet a better colour for their accusation; for Virgil has evidently translated Theocritus, Hesiod, and Homer, in many places; besides what he has taken from Ennius in his own language: Terence was not only known to translate Menander, (which he avows also in his Prologues,) but was said also to be helped in those translations by Scipio the African, and

^s Published in quarto in 1668.

Lælius : and Tasso, the most excellent of modern poets, and whom I reverence next to Virgil, has taken both from Homer many admirable things which were left untouched by Virgil, and from Virgil himself, where Homer could not furnish him. Yet the bodies of Virgil's and Tasso's poems were their own ; and so are all the ornaments of language and elocution in them. The same, if there were any thing commendable in this play, I could say for it. But I will come nearer to our own countrymen. Most of Shakspeare's plays, I mean the stories of them, are to be found in the *HECATOMITHI*, or *Hundred Novels of Cinthio*. I have, myself, read in his Italian, that of *ROMEO AND JULIET*, *THE MOOR OF VENICE*,⁹ and many others of them. Beaumont and Fletcher had most of theirs from Spanish novels : witness *THE CHANCES*, *THE SPANISH CURATE*, *RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE*, *THE LITTLE FRENCH LAWYER*,¹ and so many

⁹ The story of *OTHELLO* may be read in *CINTHIO*, (*Deca Terza*, novel. vii. p. 159. edit. 1583,) but that of *ROMEO AND JULIET* is not found in that writer's *HECATOMITHI*. It was originally related by Luigi da Porto, a gentleman of Vicenza, whose work (*LA GIULIETTA*) was printed at Venice in 1535. In 1554, Bandello published a Novel on the same subject. This in 1562 was formed by Arthur Brooke into a poem, entitled "*The Tragical History of ROMEO AND JULIET*;" on which Shakspeare founded his play.

¹ All the plays here named appear to have been written by Fletcher alone.

others of them, as compose the greatest part of their volume in folio. Ben Jonson, indeed, has designed his plots himself; but no man has borrowed so much from the Ancients as he has done: and he did well in it, for he has thereby beautified our language.

But these little criticks do not well consider what is the work of a poet, and what the graces of a poem. The story is the least part of either: I mean the foundation of it, before it is modelled by the art of him who writes it; who forms it with more care, by exposing only the beautiful parts of it to view, than a skilful lapidary sets a jewel. On this foundation of the story the characters are raised; and, since no story can afford characters enough for the variety of the English stage, it follows that it is to be altered, and enlarged, with new persons, accidents, and designs, which will almost make it new. When this is done, the forming it into acts and scenes, disposing of actions and passions into their proper places, and beautifying both with descriptions, similitudes, and propriety of language, is the principal employment of the poet; as being the largest field of fancy, which is the principal quality required in him: for so much the word *ποίησις* implies.—Judgment, indeed, is necessary in him; but it is fancy that gives the life-touches, and the secret graces to it; especially in serious plays, which depend not much on observation. For to write humour in comedy, (which is the theft of poets

from mankind,) little of fancy is required; the poet observes only what is ridiculous and pleasant folly, and by judging exactly what is so, he pleases in the representation of it.²

But in general, the employment of a poet is like that of a curious gunsmith or watchmaker: the iron or silver is not his own, but they are the least part of that which gives the value; the price lies wholly in the workmanship. And he who works dully on a story, without moving laughter in a comedy, or raising concernments in a serious play, is no more to be accounted a good poet, than a gunsmith of the Minories is to be compared with the best workman of the town.

But I have said more of this than I intended; and more, perhaps, than I needed to have done. I shall but laugh at them hereafter, who accuse me with so little reason; and withal, contemn their dulness, who, if they could ruin that little reputation I have got, and which I value not, yet would want both wit and learning to establish their own, or to be remembered in after ages for any thing, but only that which makes them ridiculous in this.

² Our author, in my apprehension, has here, by anticipation, given a complete answer to the intemperate invectives which many years afterwards Langbaine published against him on the subject of plagiarism. See his "Account of the English Dramatick Poets," 8vo. 1691, pp. 130—177.

OF
HEROICK PLAYS,
AN ESSAY;

PREFIXED TO
THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA,

FIRST PRINTED IN QUARTO, IN 1672.

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 and which are now being re-issued
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OF
HEROICK PLAYS:
AN ESSAY.²

WHETHER Heroick Verse ought to be admitted into serious plays, is not now to be disputed : it is already in possession of the stage ; and I dare confidently affirm, that very few tragedies, in this age, shall be received without it.³ All the arguments which are formed against it, can amount to no more than this,—that it is not so near

² This Essay was originally prefixed to our author's *CONQUEST OF GRANADA*, which was first published in 1672. That play, however, appears to have been first acted in the year 1670 ; for the author in the Epilogue to the First Part, tells the audience, that he had not yet attained his fortieth year. He was born in August 1631. In the Preface to *THE MOCK ASTROLOGER*, which appeared in 1671, as we have already seen, he mentions *THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA*, as having been previously acted, though not then published.

³ Dryden, says Gildon, (*LAWS OF POETRY*, 8vo. 1721, p. 65,) “ was so fond of rhyme, that he brought it upon the stage, and established it so far by his success, that he ventured in one of his prefaces to say—that it had now so

conversation as prose ; and therefore not so natural. But it is very clear to all who understand poetry, that serious plays ought not to imitate conversation too nearly. If nothing were to be raised above that level, the foundation of poetry would be destroyed. And if you once admit of a latitude, that thoughts may be exalted, and that images and actions may be raised above the life, and described in measure without rhyme, that leads you insensibly from your own principles to mine : you are already so far onward of your way, that you have forsaken the imitation of ordinary converse ; you are gone beyond it ; and, to continue where you are, is to lodge in the open field, betwixt two inns. You have lost that which you call natural, and have not acquired the last perfection of art. But it was only custom which cozened us so long : we thought, because Shakspeare and Fletcher went no farther, that there the pillars of poetry were to

strong possession of the stage, that he durst prophecy no play would take without it ; and yet he saw in less than a year's time that scarce any play could be received with it. This change was caused not only by THE REHEARSAL, but also by several admirable reflections in this Essay." [THE ESSAY ON POETRY by the Earl of Mulgrave.]—With respect to the effect of that Essay, he is not quite correct ; for it could not have co-operated with THE REHEARSAL in discrediting rhyme at the period mentioned, not having been published till about ten years afterwards. See Wood's *ATH. OXON.* ii. (*Fals.*) col. 223.

be erected; that, because they excellently described passion without rhyme, therefore rhyme was not capable of describing it. But time has now convinced most men of that error. It is indeed so difficult to write verse, that the adversaries of it have a good plea against many who undertake that task, without being formed by art or nature for it. Yet, even they who have written worst in it, would have written worse without it: they have cozened many with their sound, who never took the pains to examine their sense. In fine, they have succeeded; though it is true, they have more dishonoured rhyme by their good success, than they could have done by their ill. But I am willing to let fall this argument: it is free for every man to write, or not to write, in verse, as he judges it to be or not to be his talent; or as he imagines the audience will receive it.

For Heroick Plays, (in which only I have used it without the mixture of prose,) the first light we had of them on the English Theatre was from the late Sir William D'Avenant. It being forbidden him in the rebellious times to act tragedies and comedies, because they contained some matter of scandal to those good people, who could more easily dispossess their lawful sovereign, than endure a wanton jest, he was forced to turn his thoughts another way, and to introduce the examples of moral virtue, writ in verse, and performed in reci-

tative musick.⁴ The original of this musick, and of the scenes⁵ which adorned his work, he had from the Italian operas; but he heightened his characters (as I may probably imagine) from the example of Corneille and some French poets. In this condition did this part of poetry remain at his Majesty's return; when growing bolder, as being now owned by a publick authority, he reviewed his *SIEGE OF RHODES*, and caused it to be acted as a just drama. But as few men have the happiness to begin and finish any new project, so neither did he live to make his design perfect: there wanted the fulness of a plot, and the variety of characters, to form it as it ought; and perhaps, something might have been added to the beauty of the style. All which he would have performed with more exactness, had he pleased to have given us another work of the same nature. For myself and others who come after him, we are bound, with all veneration to his memory, to acknowledge

⁴ The first edition of Sir William D'Avenant's *SIEGE OF RHODES* was published in 4to. in 1656, with the following title: "THE SIEGE OF RHODES, made a representation by the art of prospective in scenes; and the story sung in recitative musick.—At the back part of Rutland House, in the upper end of Aldersgate-street, London."

⁵ In the time of Shakspeare, and long afterwards, our English theatres were unfurnished with scenes. See the *PLAYS and POEMS of Shakspeare*, vol. i. part ii. p. 67.

what advantage we received from that excellent groundwork which he laid; and since it is an easy thing to add to what already is invented, we ought all of us, without envy to him, or partiality to ourselves, to yield him the precedence in it.

Having done him this justice, as my guide, I may do myself so much, as to give an account of what I have performed after him. I observed then, as I said, what was wanting to the perfection of his SIEGE OF RHODES; which was design, and variety of characters. And in the midst of this consideration, by mere accident I opened the next book that lay by me, which was an Ariosto in Italian; and the very first two lines of that poem gave me light to all I could desire:

Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori,

Le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto, &c.

For the very next reflection which I made, was this,—that an heroick play ought to be an imitation, in little, of an heroick poem; and consequently, that love and valour ought to be the subject of it. Both these Sir William D'Avenant had begun to shadow; but it was so, as first discoverers draw their maps, with head-lands, and promontories, and some few outlines of somewhat taken at a distance, and which the designer saw not clearly. The common drama obliged him to a plot well-formed and pleasant, or as the Ancients called it, one entire and great action. But this he afforded not himself in a story, which he neither filled with persons, nor beautified with characters,

nor varied with accidents. The laws of an heroick poem did not dispense with those of the other, but raised them to a greater height; and indulged him a farther liberty of fancy, and of drawing all things as far above the ordinary proportion of the stage, as that is beyond the common words and actions of human life; and therefore, in the scanting of his images, and design, he complied not enough with the greatness and majesty of an heroick poem.

I am sorry I cannot discover my opinion of this kind of writing, without dissenting much from his, whose memory I love and honour. But I will do it with the same respect to him, as if he were now alive, and overlooking my paper while I write. His judgment of an heroick poem was this:—*That it ought to be dressed in a more familiar and easy shape; more fitted to the common actions and passions of human life; and, in short, more like a glass of nature, shewing us ourselves in our ordinary habits, and figuring a more practicable virtue to us, than was done by the ancients or moderns.*” Thus, he takes the image of an heroick poem from the drama, or stage-poetry; and accordingly, intended to divide it into five books, representing the same number of acts, and every book into several cantos, imitating the scenes which compose our acts.

But this, I think, is rather a play in narration, as I may call it, than an heroick poem. If at least you will not prefer the opinion of a single

man to the practice of the most excellent authors both of ancient and latter ages. I am no admirer of quotations; but you shall hear, if you please, one of the ancients delivering his judgment on this question; it is Petronius Arbiter, the most elegant, and one of the most judicious authors of the Latin tongue; who, after he had given many admirable rules for the structure and beauties of an epick poem, concludes all in these following words:—
“*Non enim res gestæ versibus comprehendendæ sunt, quod longe melius historici faciunt: sed, per ambages, deorumque ministeria, præcipitandus est liber spiritus, ut potius furentis animi vaticinatio appareat, quam religiosæ orationis, sub testibus, fides.*” In which sentence, and his own Essay of a Poem which immediately he gives you, it is thought he taxes Lucan, who followed too much the truth of history; crowded sentences together; was too full of points; and too often offered at somewhat which had more of the sting of an epigram, than of the dignity and state of an heroick poem. Lucan used not much the help of his Heathen Deities: there was neither the ministry of the gods, nor the precipitation of the soul, nor the fury of a prophet, (of which my author speaks,) in his PHARSALIA: he treats you more like a philosopher, than a poet; and instructs you in verse, with what he had been taught by his uncle Seneca in prose. In one word, he walks soberly a-foot, when he might fly. Yet Lucan is not always this religious historian. The oracle of Appius, and the witchcraft of

Erictho will somewhat atone for him, who was, indeed, bound up by an ill-chosen and known argument, to follow truth with great exactness. For my part, I am of opinion, that neither Homer, Virgil, Statius, Ariosto, Tasso, nor our English Spencer, could have formed their poems half so beautiful, without those gods and spirits, and those enthusiastick parts of poetry which compose the most noble parts of all their writings. And I will ask any man who loves heroick poetry, (for I will not dispute their tastes who do not,) if the Ghost of Polydorus in Virgil, the enchanted Wood in Tasso, and the Bower of Bliss in Spencer, (which he borrows from that admirable Italian,) could have been omitted without taking from their works some of the greatest beauties in them? And if any man object the improbabilities of a spirit appearing, or of a palace raised by magick, I boldly answer him, that an heroick poet is not tied to a bare representation of what is true, or exceeding probable, but that he may let himself loose to visionary objects, and to the representation of such things as depending not on sense, and therefore not to be comprehended by knowledge, may give him a freer scope for imagination. It is enough, that in all ages and religions the greatest part of mankind have believed the power of magick, and that there are spirits or spectres which have appeared. This, I say, is foundation enough for poetry: and I dare farther affirm, that the whole doctrine of separated beings, whether those

spirits are incorporeal substances, (which Mr. Hobbes, with some reason, thinks to imply a contradiction,) or that they are a thinner and more aerial sort of bodies, (as some of the Fathers have conjectured,) may better be explicated by poets, than by philosophers or divines. For their speculations on this subject are wholly poetical; they have only their fancy for their guide; and that, being sharper in an excellent poet than it is likely it should be in a phlegmatick, heavy gown-man, will see farther in its own empire, and produce more satisfactory notions on those dark and doubtful problems.

Some men think they have raised a great argument against the use of spectres and magick in heroick poetry, by saying—they are unnatural: but, whether they or I believe there are such things, is not material; it is enough that, for aught we know, they may be in nature; and whatever is or may be, is not properly unnatural. Neither am I much concerned at Mr. Cowley's verses before Gondibert; though his authority is almost sacred to me. It is true, he has resembled the old epick poetry to a fantastick fairy-land; but he has contradicted himself by his own example; for he has himself made use of angels, and visions, in his *DAVIDEIS*, as well as Tasso in his *GODFREY*.

What I have written on this subject will not be thought digression by the reader, if he please to remember what I said in the beginning of this

Essay,—that I have modelled my Heroick Plays by the rules of an Heroick Poem. And, if that be the most noble, the most pleasant, and the most instructive way of writing in verse, and, withal, the highest pattern of human life, as all poets have agreed, I shall need no other argument to justify my choice in this imitation. One advantage the drama has above the other, namely, that it represents to view, what the poem only does relate; and *Segnius irritant animum demissa per aurem, quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus*, as Horace tells us.

To those who object my frequent use of drums and trumpets, and my representations of battles,—I answer, I introduced them not on the English stage: Shakspeare used them frequently; and, though Jonson shows no battle in his CATILINE, yet you hear from behind the scenes, the sounding of trumpets, and the shouts of fighting armies. But I add farther; that these warlike instruments, and, even their presentations of fighting on the stage, are no more than necessary to produce the effects of an Heroick Play; that is, to raise the imagination of the audience, and to persuade them, for the time, that what they behold on the theatre is really performed. The poet is, then, to endeavour an absolute dominion over the minds of the spectators; for though our fancy will contribute to its own deceit, yet a writer ought to help its operation. And that the Red Bull⁶ has formerly

⁶ See p. 71. n. 6.

done the same, is no more an argument against our practice, than it would be for a physician to forbear an approved medicine, because a mountebank has used it with success.

Thus I have given a short account of Heroick Plays. I might now, with the usual eagerness of an author, make a particular defence of this. But the common opinion, (how unjust soever,) has been so much to my advantage, that I have reason to be satisfied; and to suffer with patience all that can be urged against it.

For, otherwise, what can be more easy for me, than to defend the character of Almanzor, which is one great exception that is made against the play? It is said, that Almanzor is no perfect pattern of heroick virtue; that he is a contemner of kings; and that he is made to perform impossibilities.

I must, therefore avow, in the first place, from whence I took the character. The first image I had of him, was from the Achilles of Homer; the next from Tasso's Rinaldo, who was a copy of the former; and the third from the Artaban of Monsieur Calpranede; who has imitated both. The original of these, Achilles, is taken by Homer for his hero; and is described by him as one, who in strength and courage surpassed the rest of the Grecian army, but, withal, of so fiery a temper, so impatient of an injury, even from his king and general, that, when his mistress was to be forced from him by the command of Agamemnon,

he not only disobeyed it, but returned him an answer full of contumely, and in the most opprobrious terms he could imagine. They are Homer's words which follow, and I have cited but some few amongst a multitude :

Οἰνοβαρές, κύνος ὁμῶς ἔχων, κραδίην δ' ἐλάφοιο.

Il. α. v. 225.

Δημοβόρος βασιλεῦς, &c. Il. α. v. 231.

Nay, he proceeded so far in his insolence, as to draw out his sword, with intention to kill him :

Ἐλκίῳ δ' ἐκ κολεοῖο μέγα ξίφος. Il. α. v. 194.

and, if Minerva had not appeared, and held his hand, he had executed his design ; and it was all she could do to dissuade him from it. The event was that he left the army, and would fight no more. Agamemnon gives his character thus to Nestor :

Ἄλλ' ὁδ' ἀνὴρ ἐθέλει περὶ πάντων ἔμμεναι ἄλλων,

Πάντων μὲν κρατέειν ἐθέλει, πάντεσσι δ' ἀνασσεῖν.

Il. α. v. 287, 288.

and Horace gives the same description of him in his Art of Poetry :

— *Honoratum si fortè reponis Achillem,*

Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,

Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.

Tasso's chief character, Rinaldo, was a man of the same temper ; for when he had slain Gernando, in his heat of passion, he not only refused to be judged by Godfrey, his general, but threatened, that if he came to seize him, he would right him-

self by arms upon him ; witness these following lines of Tasso :

*Venga egli, o mandi, io terrò fermo il piede ;
Giudici fian tra noi la sorte, e l'arme :
Fera tragedia vuol che s' appresenti,
Per lor diporto, alle nemiche genti.*

You see how little these great authors did esteem the point of honour, so much magnified by the French, and so ridiculously aped by us. They made their heroes men of honour ; but so, as not to divest them quite of human passions and frailties : they content themselves to shew you, what men of great spirits would certainly do, when they were provoked, not what they were obliged to do by the strict rules of moral virtue. For my own part, I declare myself for Homer and Tasso ; and am more in love with Achilles and Rinaldo, than with Cyrus and Oroondates. I shall never subject my characters to the French standard, where love and honour are to be weighed by drams and scruples ; yet, where I have designed the patterns of exact virtues, such as in this play are the parts of Almahide, of Ozmyn, and Benzayda, I may safely challenge the best of theirs.

But Almanzor is taxed with changing sides : and what tie has he on him to the contrary ? He is not born their subject whom he serves ; and he is injured by them to a very high degree. He threatens them, and speaks insolently of sovereign power ; but so do Achilles and Rinaldo, who were subjects and soldiers to Agamemnon and Godfrey

of Bulloigne. He talks extravagantly in his passion; but, if I would take the pains to quote an hundred passages of Ben Jonson's Cethegus, I could easily shew you, that the Rhodomontades of Almanzor are neither so irrational as his, nor so impossible to be put in execution; for Cethegus threatens to destroy nature, and to raise a new one out of it; to kill all the senate for his part of the action; to look Cato dead; and a thousand other things as extravagant, he says, but performs not one action in the play.

But none of the former calumnies will stick: and therefore, it is at last charged upon me, that Almanzor does all things; or if you will have an absurd accusation, in their nonsense who make it, that he performs impossibilities: they say, that being a stranger, he appeases two fighting factions, when the authority of their lawful sovereign could not. This is, indeed, the most improbable of all his actions; but, it is far from being impossible. Their king had made himself contemptible to his people,—as the History of Granada tells us; and Almanzor, though a stranger, yet was already known to them by his gallantry in the Juego de toros, his engagement on the weaker side, and more especially by the character of his person and brave actions, given by Abdalla just before. And, after all, the greatness of the enterprize consisted only in the daring; for he had the king's guards to second him; but we have read both of Cæsar, and many other generals, who have not only

calmed a mutiny with a word, but have presented themselves single before an army of their enemies; which, upon sight of them, has revolted from their own leaders, and come over to their trenches. In the rest of Almanzor's actions, you see him for the most part victorious; but, the same fortune has constantly attended many heroes who were not imaginary. Yet, you see it no inheritance to him; for, in the first part, he is made a prisoner, and, in the last, defeated, and not able to preserve the city from being taken. If the history of the late Duke of Guise be true, he hazarded more, and performed not less in Naples, than Almanzor is feigned to have done in Granada.⁷

⁷ "The two parts of THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA," says Dr. Johnson, "are written with a seeming determination to glut the publick with dramattick wonders; to exhibit, in its highest elevation, a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All the rays of romantick heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in ALMANZOR by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all restraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without enquiring the cause, and loves in spite of the obligations of justice, of rejection by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the scenes are for the most part delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity and majestick madness: such as if it is sometimes despised, is often revered, and in which the ridiculous is often mingled with the astonishing."

I have been too tedious in this apology ; but to make some satisfaction, I will leave the rest of my play exposed to the criticks, without defence.

The concernment of it is wholly passed from me, and ought to be in them who have been favourable to it, and are somewhat obliged to defend their own opinions. That there are errors in it, I deny not ;

Ast opere in tanto fas est obrepere somnum.^s

But I have already swept the stakes ; and, with the common good fortune of prosperous gamblers, can be content to sit quietly,—to hear my fortune cursed by some, and my faults arraigned by others ; and to suffer both without reply.

^s Horace's line is,

Verum opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum.

TO THE SECOND PART OF THE

THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA

DEFENCE OF THE EPILOGUE

TO THE SECOND PART OF THE

CONQUEST OF GRANADA:

FIRST PRINTED IN QUARTO, IN 1672.

TO PLEASE AN AGE MORE THAN THE LAST I. VOL.

EPILOGUE

TO THE SECOND PART OF

THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

THEY who have best succeeded on the stage,
Have still conform'd their genius to their age.
Thus Jonson did mechanick humour show,
When men were dull, and conversation low.
Then comedy was faultless, but 'twas coarse:
Cobb's tankard was a jest, and Otter's horse.
And, as their comedy, their love was mean;
Except by chance, in some one labour'd scene,
Which must atone for an ill-written play.
They rose;—but at their height could seldom stay.
Fame then was cheap, and the first comer sped;
And they have kept it since, by being dead:
But, were they now to write, when criticks weigh
Each line, and every word, throughout a play,
None of them, no not Jonson in his height,
Could pass, without allowing grains for weight.
Think it not envy, that these truths are told;
Our Poet's not malicious, though he's bold.
'Tis not to brand them, that their faults are shown,
But, by their errours, to excuse his own.
If love and honour now are higher rais'd,
'Tis not the poet, but the age is prais'd.
Wit's now arriv'd to a more high degree;
Our native language more refin'd and free:
Our ladies and our men now speak more wit
In conversation, than those poets writ.
Then, one of these is, consequently, true;
That what this poet writes, comes short of you,
And imitates you ill, (which most he fears,)
Or else his writing is not worse than theirs.
Yet, though you judge (as sure the criticks will)
That some before him writ with greater skill,
In this one praise he has their fame surpass'd,
To please an age more gallant than the last.

DEFENCE
OF
THE EPILOGUE:

OR
AN ESSAY ON THE DRAMATICK POETRY OF THE
LAST AGE.

THE promises of Authors, that they will write again, are, in effect, a threatening of their readers with some new impertinence; and they who perform not what they promise, will have their pardon on easy terms. It is from this consideration that I could be glad to spare you the trouble which I am now giving you, of a Postscript,⁹ if I were not obliged by many reasons to write somewhat concerning our present Plays, and those of our predecessors on the English stage.*

⁹ It appears from the original copy, which here reads—*Preface*, instead of *Postscript*, that the author at first intended to prefix this Essay to his play as a preliminary discourse. As it relates to the Epilogue, it was with more propriety subjoined to it.

* In the Epilogue to the Second Part of *THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA*, Dryden indulges his favourite pleasure in

The truth is, I have so far engaged myself in a bold Epilogue to this play, wherein I have somewhat taxed the former writing, that it was necessary for me either not to print it, or to show that I could defend it. Yet I would so maintain my opinion of the present age, as not to be wanting in my veneration for the past; I would ascribe to dead authors their just praises, in those things wherein they have excelled us; and in those wherein we contend with them for the pre-eminence, I would acknowledge our advantages to the age, and claim no victory from our wit. This being what I have proposed to myself, I hope I shall not be thought arrogant, when I enquire into their errors. For

discrediting his predecessors; and this Epilogue he has defended by a long Postscript. He had promised a Second Dialogue, in which he should *more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the English poets; who have written in the dramattick, epick, or lyrick way.* [See p. 32.] This promise was never formally performed; but with respect to the dramattick writers, he has given in his prefaces, and in this Postscript, something equivalent; but his purpose being to exalt himself by the comparison, he shews faults distinctly, and only praises excellence in general terms."—Johnson's Life of DRYDEN.

Langbaine informs us, that he had seen the two parts of THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA acted with great applause. His continuator, Gildon, however, adds a curious circumstance; that "the success of these plays was not owing to the excellency of the poet's performance, but to the extravagance; for he had always observed them to have the effect of *comedy* on the audience."

we live in an age so sceptical, that as it determines little, so it takes nothing from antiquity on trust; and I profess to have no other ambition in this Essay, than that poetry may not go backward, when all other arts and sciences are advancing. Whoever censures me for this enquiry, let him hear his character from Horace:

*Ingeniis non ille favet, plauditque sepultis,
Nostra sed impugnat; nos nostraque lividus odit.*

He favours not dead wits, but hates the living.

It was upbraided to that excellent poet, that he was an enemy to the writings of his predecessor Lucilius, because he had said, *Lucilium lutulentum fluere*, that he ran muddy; and that he ought to have retrenched from his Satires many unnecessary verses. But Horace makes Lucilius himself to justify him from the imputation of envy, by telling you that he would have done the same, had he lived in an age which was more refined:

*Si foret hoc nostrum fato delapsus in ævum,
Detereret sibi multa, recideret omne quod ultra
Perfectum traheretur: &c.*

And, both in the whole course of that Satire, and in his most admirable Epistle to Augustus, he makes it his business to prove that antiquity alone is no plea for the excellency of a poem; but that one age learning from another, the last (if we can suppose an equality of wit in the writers,) has the advantage of knowing more and better than the former. And this I think is the state of the

question in dispute. It is therefore my part to make it clear, that the language, wit, and conversation of our age, are improved and refined above the last; and then it will not be difficult to infer, that our plays have received some part of those advantages.

In the first place, therefore, it will be necessary to state in general, what this refinement is, of which we treat; and that I think will not be defined amiss, *An improvement of our Wit, Language, and Conversation; or, an alteration in them for the better.*

To begin with Language. That an alteration is lately made in ours, or since the writers of the last age, (in which I comprehend Shakspeare, Fletcher, and Jonson,) is manifest. Any man who reads those excellent poets, and compares their language with what is now written, will see it almost in every line. But, that this is an improvement of the language, or an alteration for the better, will not so easily be granted. For many are of a contrary opinion, that the English tongue was then in the height of its perfection; that from Jonson's time to ours it has been in a continual declination; like that of the Romans from the age of Virgil to Statius, and so downward to Claudian: of which, not only Petronius, but Quintilian^a himself so much complains, under the

^a Who the author of this deservedly admired Dialogue was, has long been a question among the learned. Beside

person of Secundus, in his famous Dialogue *De Causis corruptæ Eloquentiæ*.

But to shew that our language is improved, and that those people have not a just value for the age in which they live, let us consider in what the refinement of a language principally consists : that is, *either in rejecting such old words or phrases*

Quintilian, it has been attributed to Suetonius, and to Tacitus; and Mr. Melmoth, the elegant translator of this piece, is decidedly of opinion that it was not the production of any one of those celebrated writers. It was, however, undoubtedly written by Tacitus; as is proved decisively by a slight circumstance, not noticed by any of the ancient critics, and first pointed out by my learned friend, Dr. Joseph Stock, formerly fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, in his excellent edition of Tacitus, in four volumes, 8vo. 1788. This proof is derived from the following passages in the Dialogue on Oratory, compared with one of Pliny's Epistles.

In the ninth section of the Dialogue, we find these words:

"Adjice, quod *poetis*, si modo dignum aliquid elaborare et effingere velint, relinquenda conversatio amicorum, et jucunditas urbis, deserenda cætera officia, atque ut ipsi dicunt, *in nemora et lucos*, id est, in solitudinem recedendum est."

Again, in sect. 12.

"*Nemora* vero et *luci*, et secretum iter, quod Aper increpabat, tantam mihi afferunt voluptatem, ut inter præcipuos carminum fructos numerem."

Pliny, (EPIST. lib. ix. ep. 10.) in a letter to TACITUS, evidently referring to the foregoing passages, thus addresses him:—"Itaque *poemata* quiescunt, que TU inter *nemora et lucos* commodissime perfici putas."

which are ill sounding or improper, or in admitting new, which are more proper, more sounding, and more significant.

The reader will easily take notice, that when I speak of rejecting improper words and phrases, I mention not such as are antiquated by custom only; and, as I may say, without any fault of theirs. For in this case the refinement can be but accidental; that is, when the words and phrases which are rejected, happen to be improper. Neither would I be understood, when I speak of impropriety of language, either wholly to accuse the last age, or to excuse the present; and least of all, myself; for all writers have their imperfections and failings; but I may safely conclude in the general, that our improprieties are less frequent, and less gross than theirs. One testimony of this is undeniable; that we are the first who have observed them; and, certainly, to observe errors is a great step to the correcting of them. But, malice and partiality set apart, let any man who understands English, read diligently the works of Shakspeare and Fletcher; and I dare undertake that he will find in every page either some solecism of speech, or some notorious flaw in sense:³

³ These *notorious flaws in sense*, I conceive, will be found only by those who are not well acquainted with the phraseology of Shakspeare's time, as undoubtedly our author was not when he wrote this piece. He tells us himself in his Preface to Juvenal, which is dated August 18, 1692, that about twenty years before, on the suggestion

and yet these men are revered, when we are not forgiven. That their wit is great, and many times their expressions noble, envy itself cannot deny :

———— *neque ego illis detrahere ausim*

Herentem capiti multâ cum laude coronam.

But the times were ignorant in which they lived. Poetry was then, if not in its infancy among us, at least not arrived to its vigour and maturity : witness the lameness of their plots ; many of which, especially those which they writ first,⁴ (for even that age refined itself in some measure,) were made up of some ridiculous, incoherent story, which in one play many times took up the business of an age. I suppose I need not name PERICLES Prince of Tyre, nor the historical plays of Shakspeare :

of his friend Sir George Mackenzie, (author of *Essays on Moral Subjects*, and other ingenious and learned works,) he read over the principal English poets, with a view to improve his language, and to catch some of their " beautiful turns of words and thoughts."—I do not suppose that he was before unacquainted with the best English poets, but that he had not studied them with care and attention ; nor even after this perusal, did he, I conceive, ever acquire such a knowledge of the works of Shakspeare, as every intelligent modern reader may now attain, by means of those researches which have been made within these forty years, into the allusions and language of our incomparable dramattick poet.

⁴ This surely was said at random, and without authority, for the writer manifestly did not know which were Shakspeare's earliest productions. From his subsequent enumeration, he appears to have thought PERICLES, THE

besides many of the rest, as *THE WINTER'S TALE*, *LOVE'S LABOUR LOST*, *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*, which were either grounded on impossibilities, or at least so meanly written, that the comedy neither caused your mirth, nor the serious part your concernment. If I would expatiate on this subject, I could easily demonstrate that our admired Fletcher, who writ after him, neither understood correct plotting, nor that which they call *the decorum of the stage*. I would not search in his worst plays for examples: he who would consider his *PHILASTER*, his *HUMOROUS LIEUTENANT*, his *FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS*, and many others which I could name, will find them much below the applause which is now given them: he will see *Philaster* wounding his mistress, and afterwards his boy, to save himself: not to mention the Clown who enters immediately, and not only has the advantage of the combat against the hero, but diverts you from your serious concernment, with

WINTER'S TALE, and *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*, to have been among that author's early productions: but *PERICLES*, at least in its present form, was probably produced in 1607 or 1608; *THE WINTER'S TALE* there are very good grounds for believing to have been produced in 1611, and to have been one of Shakspeare's latest works; and *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*, it is almost certain, was first represented in 1603, or 1604, when its author had passed through more than half of his theatrical career. That these two plays should have been considered by Dryden as *mean performances*, is truly wonderful.

his ridiculous and absurd raillery. In his HUMOROUS LIEUTENANT you find his Demetrius and Leontius staying in the midst of a routed army, to hear the cold mirth of the Lieutenant; and Demetrius afterwards appearing with a pistol in his hand, in the next age to Alexander the Great: and for his Shepherd, he falls twice into the former indecency of wounding women. But these absurdities, which those poets committed, may more properly be called the age's fault than theirs. For, besides the want of education and learning, (which was their particular unhappiness,) they wanted the benefit of converse: but of that I shall speak hereafter, in a place more proper for it. Their audiences knew no better; and therefore were satisfied with what they brought. Those who call theirs *the Golden Age of Poetry*, have only this reason for it, that they were then content with acorns, before they knew the use of bread; or that *Ἄλκις ἀνὴρ* was become a proverb. They had many who admired them, and few who blamed them; and, certainly, a severe critick is the greatest help to a good wit: he does the office of a friend, while he designs that of an enemy; and his malice keeps a poet within those bounds, which the luxuriancy of his fancy would tempt him to overleap.

But it is not their plots which I meant, principally, to tax; I was speaking of their sense and language; and I dare almost challenge any man to shew me a page together, which is correct in

both. As for Ben Jonson, I am loth to name him, because he is a most judicious writer ; yet he very often falls into these errors : and I once more beg the reader's pardon, for accusing him of them. Only let him consider, that I live in an age where my least faults are severely censured ; and that I have no way left to extenuate my failings, but by shewing as great in those whom we admire :

Cedimus, inque vicem præbemus crura sagittis.

I cast my eyes but by chance on CATILINE ; and in the three or four last pages, found enough to conclude that Jonson writ not correctly.

————— Let the long-hid seeds
Of treason, in thee, now shoot forth in deeds
Ranker than horror.

In reading some bombast speeches of MACBETH, which are not to be understood,^s he used to say, that it was horror ; and I am much afraid that this is so.

Thy parricide late on thy only son,
After his mother, to make empty way
For thy last wicked nuptials, worse than *they*
That blaze that act of thy incestuous life,
Which gain'd thee at once a daughter and a wife.

^s Here we have another proof of our author's not having sufficiently studied the language of his predecessors. He who is perfectly conversant with the writers contemporary with Shakspeare, will not, I believe, acknowledge that there is a single passage in this noble tragedy *not to be understood*.

The sense is here extremely perplexed; and I doubt the word *they* is false grammar.

————— And be free
Not heaven itself from thy impiety.

A *synchysis*, or ill placing of words, of which Tully so much complains in oratory.

The waves, and dens of beasts, could not receive
The bodies that those souls were frighted *from*.

The preposition in the end of the sentence; a common fault with him, and which I have but lately observed in my own writings.⁶

What all the several ills that visit earth,
Plague, famine, fire, could not reach *unto*,
The sword, nor surfeits; let thy fury do.

Here are both the former faults: for, besides that the preposition *unto* is placed last in the verse, and at the half period, and is redundant, there is the former *synchysis* in the words—*the sword, nor surfeits*,⁷ which, in construction, ought to have been placed before the other.

⁶ He accordingly, on a revision, corrected this inaccuracy in every sentence of his *ESSAY ON DRAMATICK POESY*, in which it occurred.

⁷ This ill placing of words, as our author calls it, was so much the language of that day, that it must be considered as the common phraseology, and cannot be imputed as a blemish either to Jonson or Shakspeare; in whose writings, as well as in all the productions of his contemporaries and predecessors, it is frequently found. *Reach* would here perhaps be more elegant than *reach*

Catiline says of Cethegus, that for his sake he would

Go on upon the gods, kiss lightning, wrest
The engine from the Cyclops, and give fire
At face of a full cloud, and stand his ire.

To go on upon, is only to go on twice. To "give fire at face of a full cloud," was not understood in his own time:—"and stand *his ire*;" besides the antiquated word *ire*, there is the article *his*, which makes false construction: and giving fire at the face of a cloud, is a perfect image of shooting, however it came to be known in those days to Catiline.

_____ others there are,
Whom envy to the state draws and pulls on,
For contumelies received; and such are sure ones.

Ones, in the plural number: but that is frequent with him; for he says, not long after,

Cæsar and Crassus, if they be ill men,
Are mighty ones.

Such men, *they* do not succour more the cause, &c.

They redundant.

unto; but this redundancy was also authorized by the common usage of the time. In the next quotation, our author's objection to the personal pronoun *his* being used instead of the neutral *its*, furnishes another proof how little he was at this time acquainted with ancient phraseology. It was the ordinary language of every writer and speaker of those days, in prose and verse. The same may be said of "*mighty ones*," and "*Such men, they do not swear*," &c. which are afterwards objected to.

Tho' heaven should speak with all *his* wrath at once,
We should stand upright and *unfear'd*.^{*}

His is ill syntax with heaven; and by *unfear'd* he means—unafraid: words of a quite contrary signification.

The ports are open.—He perpetually uses ports for gates; which is an affected error in him, to introduce Latin by the loss of the English idiom; as in the translation of Tully's speeches he usually does.

Well-placing of words for the sweetness of pronunciation was not known till Mr. Waller introduced it; and therefore it is not to be wondered if Ben Jonson has many such lines as these:

*But being bred up in his father's needy fortunes,
brought up in's sister's prostitution, &c.*

But meanness of expression one would think not to be his error in a tragedy, which ought to be more high and sounding than any other kind of poetry;

^{*} The common use of the personal for the neutral pronoun has been already noticed. As for *unfear'd*, if our author had carefully studied our ancient language, he would have found that to *fear*, as often meant to *terrify* as to be *intimidated*; and that therefore there was no impropriety in using the word *unfear'd* with the sense of *unafraid*. Nor is such a usage peculiar to the English language; as may be proved by the double signification of the word *occido* in Latin, and many other verbs.—*Ports* for *gates*, which is next objected to, is found in many of our ancient writers, and is yet the common language of Scotland.

and yet amongst many others in CATILINE I find these four lines together :

So Asia, thou art cruelly even
 With us, for all the blows thee given :
 When we, whose virtues conquer'd thee,
 Thus by thy vices ruin'd be.

Be there is false English, for *are*,⁹ though the rhyme hides it.

But I am willing to close the book, partly out of veneration to the author, partly out of weariness to pursue an argument which is so fruitful in so small a compass. And what correctness, after this, can be expected from Shakspeare or from Fletcher, who wanted that learning and care which Jonson had? I will therefore spare my own trouble of enquiring into their faults; who, had they lived now, had doubtless written more correctly. I suppose it will be enough for me to affirm, (as I think I safely may,) that these and the like errors which I taxed in the most correct of the last age, are such, into which we do not ordinarily fall. I think few of our present writers would have left behind them such a line as this :

Contain your spirit in more stricter bounds.

But that gross way of two comparatives was

⁹ *Be* for *are*, though now become somewhat antiquated, is frequently used in the translation of the Bible, and was the common language of the reign of James the First.

then ordinary ;¹ and therefore more pardonable in Jonson.

As for the other part of refining, which consists in receiving new words and phrases, I shall not insist much on it. It is obvious that we have admitted many, some of which we wanted, and therefore our language is the richer for them, as it would be by importation of bullion : others are rather ornamental than necessary ; yet by their admission, the language is become more courtly, and our thoughts are better dressed. These are to be found scattered in the writers of our age ; and it is not my business to collect them. They who have lately written with most care, have, I believe, taken Horace for their guide ; that is, not to be too hasty in receiving of words, but rather to stay till custom has made them familiar to us :

Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi.

For I cannot approve of their way of refining, who corrupt our English idiom by mixing it too much with French : that is a sophistication of language, not an improvement of it ; a turning English into French, rather than a refining of English by French. We meet daily with those fops, who value themselves on their travelling, and pretend

¹ The same observation may be applied to almost all the other instances here produced. Our author, however, it appears from this remark, did not know that the preceding phraseology was as much sanctioned by the ordinary usage of the time, as the double comparative.

they cannot express their meaning in English, because they would put off to us some French phrase of the last edition; without considering that, for aught they know, we have a better of our own. But these are not the men who are to refine us; their talent is to prescribe fashions, not words: at best they are only serviceable to a writer, so as Ennius was to Virgil. He may *aurum ex stercore colligere*; for it is hard if, amongst many insignificant phrases, there happen not something worth preserving; though they themselves, like Indians, know not the value of their own commodity.

There is yet another way of improving language, which poets especially have practised in all ages; that is, by applying received words to a new signification; and this, I believe, is meant by Horace, in that precept which is so variously construed by expositors:

*Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum.*

And, in this way, he himself had a particular happiness; using all the tropes, and particular metaphors, with that grace which is observable in his Odes; where the beauty of expression is often greater than that of thought; as in that one example, amongst an infinite number of others, *et vultus nimium lubricus aspicitur*.

And therefore, though he innovated little, he may justly be called a great refiner of the Roman tongue. This choice of words, and heightening of

their natural signification, was observed in him by the writers of the following ages; for Petronius says of him—*et Horatii curiosa felicitas*. By this grafting, as I may call it, on old words, has our tongue been beautified by the three fore-mentioned poets, Shakspeare, Fletcher, and Jonson, whose excellencies I can never enough admire; and in this they have been followed, especially by Sir John Suckling and Mr. Waller, who refined upon them. Neither have they who succeed them, been wanting in their endeavours to adorn our mother tongue; but it is not so lawful for me to praise my living contemporaries, as to admire my dead predecessors.

I should now speak of the refinement of Wit; but I have been so large on the former subject, that I am forced to contract myself in this. I will therefore only observe to you, that the wit of the last age was yet more incorrect than their language. Shakspeare, who many times has written better than any poet in any language, is yet so far from writing wit always, or expressing that wit according to the dignity of the subject, that he writes in many places below the dullest writers of ours or of any precedent age. Never did any author precipitate himself from such heights of thought to so low expressions, as he often does. He is the very Janus of poets; he wears almost every where two faces; and you have scarce begun to admire the one, ere you

despise the other.* Neither is the luxuriance of Fletcher, which his friends have taxed in him, a less fault than the carelessness of Shakspeare. He does not well always ; and, when he does, he is a true Englishman,—he knows not when to give over. If he wakes in one scene, he commonly slumbers in another ; and if he pleases you in the first three acts, he is frequently so tired with his labour, that he goes heavily in the fourth, and sinks under his burthen in the fifth.³

* Very few readers, I believe, will agree with our author in this unfounded depreciation of our great dramatick poet. He has undoubtedly often *written wit*, at least, what in his own time was considered wit. The prevalent opinions of the age should always, in such cases, be kept in view. Sir John Harrington was by the unanimous consent of his own age, considered as a man of extraordinary wit ; yet his writings would not at this day gain him so high a reputation. They prove, however, decisively, that what Dryden would call *clenches*, was then considered as sterling wit. But Shakspeare is not to be defended on this ground alone ; for he has given us many dialogues which even the more scrupulous and refined taste of the present age must acknowledge to be witty. By *wit*, it should be remembered, our author means *sharpness of conceit* ; as he afterwards expressly tells us.

In these critical Essays, he is not always consistent with himself ; for in the Preface to THE MOCK ASTROLOGER, he charges Shakspeare with *a superfluity and waste of wit*.

³ Langbaine ("Account of the English Dramatick Poets," 1690, p. 144.) tells us, that he had either read, or

For Ben Jonson, the most judicious of poets, he always writ properly, and as the character required; and I will not contest farther with my friends who call that wit: it being very certain, that even folly itself, well represented, is wit in a larger signification; and that there is fancy, as well as judgment in it, though not so much, or noble: because all poetry being imitation, that of folly is a lower exercise of fancy, though perhaps as difficult as the other; for it is a kind of looking downward in the poet, and representing that part of mankind which is below him.

In these low characters of vice and folly, lay the excellency of that inimitable writer; who, when at any time he aimed at wit in a stricter sense, that is, sharpness of conceit, was forced either to borrow from the ancients, as to my knowledge he did very much from Plautus; or, when he trusted himself alone, often fell into meanness of expression.—Nay, he was not free from the lowest and most groveling kind of wit, which we call clenches; of which **EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR** is infinitely full, and, which is worse, the wittiest persons in

been informed, “that it was generally Fletcher’s practice, after he had finished three acts of a play, to shew them to the actors; and when they had agreed on terms, he huddled up the two last, without that care that behoved him.” His information on this subject appears to have been perfectly correct; for I find, from several manuscript letters of the dramatick poets of that time, that to sell an unfinished play was a common practice.

the drama speak them. His other comedies are not exempted from them. Will you give me leave to name some few? Asper, in which character he personates himself, (and he neither was, nor thought himself a fool,) exclaiming against the ignorant judges of the age, speaks thus :

How monstrous and detested is't, to see
A fellow, that has neither art nor brain;
Sit like an *Aristarchus*, or *stark ass*,
Taking men's lines, with a *tobacco-face*,
In *snuff*, &c.

And presently after,

I marvel whose wit 'twas to put a prologue in yond Sackbut's mouth. They might well think he would be out of tune, and yet you'd play upon him too.—

Will you have another of the same stamp?

O, I cannot abide these limbs of *sattin*, or rather *Satan*.

But it may be you will object that this was Asper, Macilente, or Carlo Buffone: you shall, therefore, hear him speak in his own person, and that, in the two last lines or sting of an epigram: it is inscribed to *Fine Grand*, who, he says, was indebted to him for many things, which he reckons there; and concludes thus:

Forty things more, dear *Grand*, which you know true,
For which, or pay me quickly, or I'll pay you.⁴

This was then the mode of wit, the vice of the

⁴ I doubt whether our author was aware, that to *pay* signified to *beat*, as well as to discharge a debt. If he

age, and not Ben Jonson's ; for you see, a little before him, that admirable wit, Sir Phillip Sidney, perpetually playing with his words. In his time, I believe, it ascended first into the pulpit, where, if you will give me leave to clench too, it yet finds the benefit of its clergy ; for they are commonly the first corrupters of eloquence, and the last reformed from vicious oratory : as a famous Italian has observed before me, in his Treatise of the Corruption of the Italian Tongue, which he principally ascribes to priests and preaching friars.

But, to conclude with what brevity I can, I will only add this in the defence of our present writers ; that if they reach not some excellencies of Ben Jonson, (which no age, I am confident, ever shall,) yet, at least, they are above that meanness of thought which I have taxed, and which is frequent in him.

That the wit of this age is much more courtly, may easily be proved by viewing the characters of gentlemen which were written in the last. First, for Jonson :—Truewit, in *THE SILENT WOMAN*, was his master-piece, and Truewit was a scholar-

did, he might with equal propriety object to Catullus, who says that his villa

non ad austri
 Flatus *opposita* est, nec ad Favoni,
 Nec sævi Boreæ, aut Apeliotæ,
 Verum ad millia quindecim et ducentos.
 O ventum horribilem, atque pestilentem !

like kind of man, a gentleman with an allay of pedantry ; a man who seems mortified to the world, by much reading. The best of his discourse is drawn, not from the knowledge of the town, but books ; and, in short, he would be a fine gentleman in an University. Shakspeare shewed the best of his skill in his Mercutio ; and he said himself, that he was forced to kill him in the third act, to prevent being killed by him. But for my part, I cannot find he was so dangerous a person : I see nothing in him but what was so exceeding harmless, that he might have lived to the end of the play, and died in his bed, without offence to any man.⁵

⁵ It is extraordinary that our author should in this place have taken no notice of one of Shakspeare's most finished characters, in that style which he is here considering ; I mean Benedick, in whom, as Mr. Steevens has justly remarked, are combined—"the wit, the humourist, the gentleman, and the soldier."

On the tradition, that "Shakspeare was obliged to kill Mercutio in the third act, lest he should have been killed by him ;" and our author's reflection—"that he thinks him no such formidable person, but that he might have lived to the end of the play, and died in his bed without offence to any man ;" Dr. Johnson has made the following judicious observation : "Dryden well knew, had he been in quest of truth, that in a pointed sentence, more regard is commonly had to the words than the thought ; and that it is very seldom to be rigorously understood. Mercutio's wit, gaiety, and courage, will always procure him friends that wish him a longer life ; but his death is not precipitated : he has lived out the time allotted to him in

Fletcher's Don John is our only bugbear ; and yet, I may affirm without suspicion of flattery, that he now speaks better,⁶ and that his character is maintained with much more vigour in the fourth and fifth acts, than it was by Fletcher in the three former. I have always acknowledged the wit of our predecessors, with all the veneration which becomes me ; but I am sure, their wit was not that of gentlemen ; there was ever somewhat that was ill-bred and clownish in it, and which confessed the conversation of the authors.

And this leads me to the last and greatest advantage of our writing, which proceeds from conversation. In the age wherein those poets lived, there was less of gallantry than in ours ; neither did they keep the best company of theirs.⁷ Their fortune has been* much like that of Epicurus,

the construction of the play. Nor do I doubt the ability of Shakspeare to have continued his existence, though some of his sallies are perhaps out of the reach of Dryden ; whose genius was not very fertile of merriment, nor ductile to humour, but acute, argumentative, comprehensive, and sublime."

⁶ In Fletcher's CHANCES, as altered by the Duke of Buckingham.

⁷ Though Shakspeare did not keep company with courtiers, there is abundant evidence that he lived in familiarity with several respectable gentlemen ; and he appears to have been as well acquainted with the language of the court, as if he had passed his life there.

* This phraseology, which was perhaps once general, is now peculiar to Scotland. We should now write—Their fortune *was*, &c.

in the retirement of his gardens; to live almost unknown, and to be celebrated after their decease; I cannot find that any of them were conversant in courts, except Ben Jonson: and his *genius* lay not so much that way, as to make an improvement by it. Greatness was not, then, so easy of access, nor conversation so free as now it is. I cannot therefore conceive it any insolence to affirm, that by the knowledge and pattern of their wit, who writ before us, and by the advantage of our own conversation, the discourse and raillery of our comedies excel what has been written by them. And this will be denied by none, but some few old fellows, who value themselves on their acquaintance with the Black-Friars: who, because they saw their plays, would pretend a right to judge ours. The memory of these grave gentlemen is their only plea for being Wits. They can tell a story of Ben Jonson, and perhaps have had fancy enough to give a supper in *Apollo*, that they might be called his sons: and because they were drawn in to be laughed at in those times, they think themselves now sufficiently intitled to laugh at ours. Learning I never saw in any of them, and wit no more than they could remember. In short, they were unlucky to have been bred in an unpolished age, and more unlucky to live to a refined one. They have lasted beyond their own, and are cast behind ours; and not contented to have known little at the age of twenty, they boast of their ignorance at threescore.

Now if any ask me, whence it is that our conversation is so much refined, I must freely, and without flattery, ascribe it to the court; and, in it, particularly to the king, whose example gives a law to it. His own misfortunes, and the nation's, afforded him an opportunity, which is rarely allowed to sovereign princes; I mean of travelling, and being conversant in the most polished courts of Europe: and, thereby, of cultivating a spirit, which was formed by nature to receive the impressions of a gallant and generous education. At his return, he found a nation lost as much in barbarism as in rebellion. And as the excellency of his nature forgave the one, so the excellency of his manners reformed the other. The desire of imitating so great a pattern, first awakened the dull and heavy spirits of the English from their natural reservedness; loosened them from their stiff forms of conversation; and made them easy and pliant to each other in discourse. Thus, insensibly, our way of living became more free; and the fire of the English wit, which was before stifled under a constrained, melancholy way of breeding, began first to display its force, by mixing the solidity of our nation with the air and gaiety of our neighbours. This being granted to be true, it would be a wonder if the poets, whose work is imitation, should be the only persons in three kingdoms, who should not receive advantage by it; or, if they should not more easily

imitate the wit and conversation of the present age, than of the past.

Let us, therefore, admire the beauties and the heights of Shakspeare, without falling after him into a carelessness, and (as I may call it) a lethargy of thought, for whole scenes together. Let us imitate, as we are able, the quickness and easiness of Fletcher, without proposing him as a pattern to us, either in the redundancy of his matter, or the incorrectness of his language. Let us admire his wit and sharpness of conceit; but let us at the same time acknowledge that it was seldom so fixed, and made proper to his character, as that the same things might not be spoken by any person in the play. Let us applaud his scenes of love; but let us confess, that he understood not either greatness or perfect honour in the parts of any of his women. In fine, let us allow, that he had so much fancy, as when he pleased he could write wit: but that he wanted so much judgment, as seldom to have written humour, or described a pleasant folly. Let us ascribe to Jonson the height and accuracy of judgment, in the ordering of his plots, his choice of characters, and maintaining what he had chosen, to the end. But let us not think him a perfect pattern of imitation, except it be in humour; for love, which is the foundation of all comedies in other languages, is scarcely mentioned in any of his plays: and for humour itself, the poets of this age will be more wary than to imitate the mean-

ness of his persons. Gentlemen will now be entertained with the follies of each other ; and though they allow Cob and Tib to speak properly, yet they are not much pleased with their tankard, or with their rags : and, surely their conversation can be no jest to them on the *theatre*, when they would avoid it in the street.

To conclude all ; let us render to our predecessors what is their due, without confining ourselves to a servile imitation of all they writ ; and, without assuming to ourselves the title of better poets, let us ascribe to the gallantry and civility of our age the advantage which we have above them ; and to our knowledge of the customs and manners of it, the happiness we have to please beyond them.

ness of his person. Criticism will now be
 entertained with the folios of each other; and
 though they allow Job and Tith to speak properly,
 yet they are not much pleased with their manner,
 or with their rage; and surely they may reason
 can be no just to them on the score, which they
 would avoid it in the street. To conclude all; let us
 return what is their due, without containing our-
 selves to a servile imitation of all they write; and
 without assuming to ourselves the title of better
 poets, let us ascribe to the English and civility
 of our age; the advantages which we have above
 them; and to our knowledge of the customs and
 manners of all the happy nations, that is, of those
 beyond them.

PREFACE

THE TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

THE

GROUND OF CRITICISM
IN TRAGEDY:

FIRST PRINTED IN QUARTO, IN 1679.

THE
GROUNDS OF CRITICISM

IN TRAGEDY

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN, 1870.

PREFACE
TO
TROILUS AND CRESSIDA:

CONTAINING
THE GROUNDS OF CRITICISM IN TRAGEDY.

THE poet Æschylus was held in the same veneration by the Athenians of afterages as Shakspeare is by us ; and Longinus has judged in favour of him, that he had a noble boldness of expression, and that his imaginations were lofty and heroick : but on the other side Quintilian affirms, that he was daring to extravagance. It is certain that he affected pompous words, and that his sense too often was obscured by figures : notwithstanding these imperfections, the value of his writings after his decease was such, that his countrymen ordained an equal reward to those poets who could alter his plays to be acted on the theatre, with those whose productions were wholly new, and of their own. The case is not the same in England ; though the difficulties of altering are greater, and our reverence for Shakspeare much more just, than that of the Grecians for Æschylus. In the age of that poet the Greek tongue was

arrived to its full perfection; they had then amongst them an exact standard of writing, and of speaking: the English language is not capable of such a certainty; and we are at present so far from it, that we are wanting in the very foundation of it, a perfect grammar.⁸ Yet it must be allowed to the present age, that the tongue in general is so much refined since Shakspeare's time, that many of his words, and more of his phrases, are scarce intelligible: and of those which we understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure. It is true, that in his latter plays⁹ he had worn off

⁸ It appears from the Dedication which precedes this Preface, that at this time a scheme was in agitation to form a Society for refining the English Language, and fixing its standard, under the patronage of Robert, earl of Sunderland, then Secretary of State. Lord Roscommon was the principal promoter of this scheme. See p. 9.

⁹ It is clear, as I have already observed, not only that our author did not know, with any kind of accuracy, which were Shakspeare's earliest or latter productions; but that he was not even possessed of any such information as might be made the basis of probable conjecture. KING LEAR, CYMBELINE, MACBETH, JULIUS CÆSAR, ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, TIMON OF ATHENS, CORIOLANUS, THE WINTER'S TALE, and THE TEMPEST, we have very good grounds for supposing Shakspeare's latest productions; and these pieces are certainly not less "pestered with figurative expressions," than several others which might be enumerated. I formerly thought that OTHELLO was

somewhat of the rust; but the tragedy which I have undertaken to correct, was, in all probability, one of his first endeavours on the stage.

The original story was written by one Lollius, a Lombard, in Latin verse, and translated by Chaucer into English;¹ intended, I suppose, a satire on the inconstancy of women. I find nothing of it among the ancients, not so much as the name Cressida once mentioned. Shakspeare

one of our great dramattick poet's latest compositions; but I now know, from indisputable evidence, that was not the case. So that here also our author appears to have been but little acquainted with the chronology of Shakspeare's dramas; for (without entering into the question—how much or how little of PERICLES was his,) THE PRINCE OF TYRE was so far from being *elder than* THE MOOR, as he has asserted in the Prologue to CIRCE, (1677) that it was some years younger than that excellent tragedy. As to the play of TROILUS AND CRESSIDA, which Dryden supposed to be "one of his first endeavours on the stage," there are good grounds for ascribing it to the year 1602; and we *know* that he had produced near twenty dramas before that time.

¹ Mr. TYRWHITT was of opinion, that Chaucer's TROILUS and CRESEIDE was for the most part a translation of the FILOSTRATO of Boccace, (a very rare poem, printed in 4to. 1498,) but with many variations, and such large additions, that it contains above 2700 lines more than its original. "This (he adds) is evident, not only from the fable and characters, which are the same in both poems, but also from a number of passages in the English, which are literally translated from the Italian." See Tyrwhitt's Chaucer, vol. iii. p. 311; and vol. iv. p. 85, n. 62.

(as I hinted) in the apprenticeship of his writing, modelled it into that play which is now called by the name of *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*;² but so lamely is it left to us, that it is not divided into acts: which fault I ascribe to the actors who printed it after Shakspeare's death,³ and that too, so carelessly, that a more uncorrect copy I never saw. For the play itself, the author seems to have begun it with some fire; the characters of Pandarus and Thersites are promising enough; but, as if he grew weary of his task, after an entrance or two, he lets them fall: and the latter part of the tragedy is nothing but a confusion of

² Shakspeare appears to have derived the principal materials for this play from the *Troye Boke* of Lydgate, printed in 1513. Dekker, however, had before produced a play on this subject, at first entitled *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*, and afterwards, *THE TRAGEDIE OF AGAMEMNON*, which was acted in June 1599. (See *THE HISTORY OF THE STAGE*, Shakspeare's *PLAYS AND POEMS*, vol. i. part ii. p. 329). Whether Shakspeare was at all indebted to this piece, cannot now be ascertained, Dekker's play being lost.

³ It was originally published in quarto in 1609, seven years before Shakspeare's death; and not by the actors, but by two booksellers, without their consent. Dryden, however, probably knew of no other edition but that of the folio, 1623, which *was* printed by Shakspeare's fellow-comedians, Heminges and Condell, after his death.

I take this opportunity of correcting an error into which I and others have fallen, in supposing that there were two editions of this play in quarto, one with the date already

drums and trumpets, excursions and alarms. The chief persons who give name to the tragedy, are left alive: Cressida is false, and is not punished. Yet after all, because the play was Shakspeare's, and that there appeared in some places of it the admirable genius of the author, I undertook to remove that heap of rubbish under which many excellent thoughts lay wholly buried. Accordingly, I new-modelled the plot; threw out many unnecessary persons; improved those characters which were begun and left unfinished,—as Hector, Troilus, Pandarus, and Thersites; and added that of Andromache. After this I made, with no small trouble, an order and connexion of all the scenes, removing them from the places where they were

mentioned, and the other without any date.—Mr. Pope, in his Table of Editions of Shakspeare's Plays, having mentioned one of *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA* in 1609, subjoined a notice of a second copy—"as acted by the King's Majesties servants at the Globe;" not thinking it necessary to repeat the year. But in fact both these copies are one and the same edition. The truth is, that in that edition where no mention is made of the theatre in which the play was represented, we find a preface, in which, to give an additional value to the piece, the booksellers assert that it never had been acted. That being found a notorious falshood, they afterwards suppressed the preface, and printed a new title-page, in which it is stated to have been acted at the Globe Theatre by his Majesties Servants. The date of this, as of the other title-page, is 1609. I carefully examined both these copies, and found no variation whatsoever between them, except that already mentioned.

inartificially set ; and though it was impossible to keep them all unbroken, because the scene must be sometimes in the city, and sometimes in the camp, yet I have so ordered them, that there is a coherence of them with one another, and a dependence on the main design : no leaping from Troy to the Grecian tents, and thence back again in the same act ; but a due proportion of time allowed for every motion. I need not say that I have refined his language, which before was obsolete ; but I am willing to acknowledge, that as I have often drawn his English nearer to our times, so I have sometimes conformed my own to his ; and consequently, the language is not altogether so pure as it is significant. The scenes of Pandarus and Cressida, of Troilus and Pandarus, of Andromache with Hector and the Trojans, in the second act, are wholly new ; together with that of Nestor and Ulysses with Thersites, and that of Thersites with Ajax and Achilles. I will not weary my reader with the scenes which are added of Pandarus and the lovers, in the third ; and those of Thersites, which are wholly altered : but I cannot omit the last scene in it, which is almost half the act, betwixt Troilus and Hector. The occasion of raising it was hinted to me by Mr. Betterton ; the contrivance and working of it was my own. They who think to do me an injury by saying that it is an imitation of the scene betwixt Brutus and Cassius, do me an honour by supposing I could imitate the incomparable Shakspeare ;

but let me add, that if Shakspeare's scene, or that faulty copy of it in Amintor and Melantius, had never been, yet Euripides had furnished me with an excellent example in his *IPHIGENIA*, between Agamemnon and Menelaus; and from thence, indeed, the last turn of it is borrowed. The occasion which Shakspeare, Euripides, and Fletcher, have all taken, is the same,—grounded upon friendship; and the quarrel of two virtuous men, raised by natural degrees to the extremity of passion, is conducted in all three to the declination of the same passion; and concludes with a warm renewing of their friendship. But the particular ground-work which Shakspeare has taken, is incomparably the best; because he has not only chosen two of the greatest heroes of their age, but has likewise interested the liberty of Rome, and their own honours who were the redeemers of it, in this debate. And if he has made Brutus, who was naturally a patient man, to fly into excess at first, let it be remembered in his defence, that just before he has received the news of Portia's death, whom the poet, on purpose neglecting a little chronology, supposes to have died before Brutus,* only to give him an occasion of being more easily exasperated. Add to this, that the injury he had received from Cassius had long been brooding in his mind; and that a

* He had sufficient authority for this supposition. See SHAKSPEARE'S PLAYS AND POEMS, vol. vii. p. 398.

melancholy man, upon consideration of an affront, especially from a friend, would be more eager in his passion than he who had given it, though naturally more cholerick. Euripides, whom I have followed, has raised the quarrel betwixt two brothers, who were friends. The foundation of the scene was this : The Grecians were wind-bound at the port of Aulis, and the Oracle had said, that they could not sail, unless Agamemnon delivered up his daughter to be sacrificed : he refuses ; his brother, Menelaus, urges the publick safety ; the father defends himself by arguments of natural affection ; and hereupon they quarrel. Agamemnon is at last convinced, and promises to deliver up Iphigenia ; but so passionately laments his loss, that Menelaus is grieved to have been the occasion of it, and by a return of kindness, offers to intercede for him with the Grecians, that his daughter might not be sacrificed. But my friend, Mr. Rymer, has so largely, and with so much judgment, described this scene, in comparing it with that of Melantius and Amintor, that it is superfluous to say more of it : I only named the heads of it, that any reasonable man might judge it was from thence I modelled my scene betwixt Troilus and Hector. I will conclude my reflexions on it with a passage of Longinus, concerning Plato's imitation of Homer : " We ought not to regard a good imitation as a theft, but as a beautiful idea of him who undertakes to imitate, by forming himself on the invention and the work of another man ;

“ for he enters into the lists like a new wrestler
 “ to dispute the prize with the former champion.
 “ This sort of emulation, says Hesiod, is honour-
 “ able, Ἀγαθὴ δ’ ἔστι ἐν βροτοῖσι,—when we com-
 “ bat for victory with a hero, and are not without
 “ glory even in our overthrow. Those great men
 “ whom we propose to ourselves as patterns of
 “ our imitation, serve us as a torch, which is lifted
 “ up before us, to enlighten our passage; and
 “ often elevate our thoughts as high as the con-
 “ ception we have of our author’s genius.”

I have been so tedious in three acts, that I shall contract myself in the two last. The beginning scenes of the fourth act are either added, or changed wholly by me; the middle of it is Shakspeare altered, and mingled with my own: three or four of the last scenes are altogether new; and the whole fifth act, both the plot and the writing, are my own additions.

But having written so much for imitation of what is excellent, in that part of the Preface which related only to myself, methinks it would neither be unprofitable nor unpleasant to enquire how far we ought to imitate our own poets, Shakspeare and Fletcher, in their tragedies; and this will occasion another enquiry, how those two writers differ between themselves. But since neither of these questions can be solved, unless some measures be first taken, by which we may be enabled to judge truly of their writings, I shall endeavour, as briefly as I can, to discover the grounds and reason

of all Criticism, applying them in this place only to tragedy. Aristotle, with his interpreters, and Horace, and Longinus, are the authors to whom I owe my lights ; and what part soever of my own plays, or of this, which no mending could make regular, shall fall under the condemnation of such judges, it would be impudence in me to defend. I think it no shame to retract my errors, and am well pleased to suffer in the cause, if the art may be improved at my expence : I therefore proceed to

THE GROUNDS OF CRITICISM IN TRAGEDY.⁴

Tragedy is thus defined by Aristotle (omitting what I thought unnecessary in his definition). It is an imitation of one entire, great, and probable action, not told, but represented ; which, by moving in us fear and pity, is conducive to the purging of those two passions in our minds. More largely thus : Tragedy describes or paints an action, which action must have all the proprieties above named. First, it must be one or single, that is, it must not be a history of one man's life, suppose of Alexander the Great, or Julius Cæsar, but one single action of theirs. This condemns all Shakspeare's historical plays, which are rather chronicles represented, than tragedies ; and all double action

⁴ Dr. Johnson was of opinion that Rymer's book, (on the Tragedies of the last Age) which was published in 1678, gave occasion to this dissertation.

of plays. As to avoid a satire upon others, I will make bold with my own *MARRIAGE A-LA-MODE*, where there are manifestly two actions, not depending upon one another : but in *OEDIPUS* there cannot properly be said to be two actions, because the love of Adrastus and Eurydice has a necessary dependence on the principal design, into which it is woven. The natural reason of this rule is plain; for two different independent actions distract the attention and concernment of the audience, and consequently destroy the intention of the poet. If his business be to move terrour and pity, and one of his actions be comical, the other tragical, the former will divert the people, and utterly make void his greater purpose.⁵ Therefore, as in perspective, so in tragedy, there must be a point of sight in which all the lines terminate; otherwise the eye wanders, and the work is false. This was the practice of the Grecian stage. But Terence made an innovation in the Roman: all his plays have double actions; for it was his custom to translate two Greek comedies, and to weave them into one of his, yet so, that both the actions were

⁵ Our author (as has been already observed) is not always consistent with himself. In the Dedication of *THE SPANISH FRIAR*, written two years after this Essay appeared, he prophesies that few tragedies, except those in verse, would succeed, unless they were lightened with a course of mirth: "A several-genius (he adds) is required to either way; and without both of them, a man, in my opinion, is but half a writer for the stage."

comical; and one was principal, the other but secondary or subservient. And this has obtained on the English stage, to give us the pleasure of variety.

As the action ought to be one, it ought as such, to have order in it; that is, to have a natural beginning, a middle, and an end. A natural beginning, says Aristotle, is that which could not necessarily have been placed after another thing; and so of the rest. This consideration will arraign all plays after the new model of Spanish plots, where accident is heaped upon accident, and that which is first might as reasonably be last: an inconvenience not to be remedied, but by making one accident naturally produce another; otherwise it is a farce, and not a play. Of this nature is *THE SLIGHTED MAID*;⁶ where there is no scene in the first act, which might not by as good reason be in the fifth. And if the action ought to be one, the tragedy ought likewise to conclude with the action of it. Thus in *MUSTAPHA*,⁷ the play should naturally have ended with the death of Zanger, and not have given us the grace-cup after dinner of Solyman's divorce from Roxolana.

The following properties of the action are so easy, that they need not my explaining. It ought to be great, and to consist of great persons, to distinguish it from comedy; where the action is

⁶ A comedy by Sir Robert Stapylton, 4to. 1663.

⁷ *MUSTAPHA* is a tragedy in rhyme, written by Roger Boyle, earl of Orrery, and published in folio, in 1672.

trivial, and the persons of inferior rank. The last quality of the action is, that it ought to be probable, as well as admirable and great. It is not necessary that there should be historical truth in it; but always necessary that there should be a likeness of truth, something that is more than barely possible, *probable* being that which succeeds or happens oftener than it misses. To invent therefore a probability, and to make it wonderful, is the most difficult undertaking in the art of poetry: for that which is not wonderful is not great, and that which is not probable will not delight a reasonable audience. This action thus described, must be represented, and not told, to distinguish dramatick poetry from epick:—but I hasten to the end, or scope of tragedy; which is to rectify or purge our passions, fear, and pity.

To instruct delightfully is the general end of all poetry. Philosophy instructs, but it performs its work by precept; which is not delightful, or not so delightful as example. To purge the passions by example, is therefore the particular instruction which belongs to tragedy. Rapin, a judicious critick, has observed from Aristotle, that pride, and want of commiseration, are the most predominant vices in mankind; therefore, to cure us of these two, the inventors of tragedy have chosen to work upon two other passions, which are, fear and pity. We are wrought to fear, by their setting before our eyes some terrible example of misfortune, which happened to persons of the

highest quality; for such an action demonstrates to us, that no condition is privileged from the turns of fortune: this must of necessity cause terrour in us, and consequently abate our pride. But when we see that the most virtuous, as well as the greatest, are not exempt from such misfortunes, that consideration moves pity in us, and insensibly works us to be helpful to, and tender over, the distressed; which is the noblest and most godlike of moral virtues. Here it is observable, that it is absolutely necessary to make a man virtuous, if we desire he should be pitied. We lament not, but detest, a wicked man; we are glad when we behold his crimes are punished, and that poetical justice is done upon him. Euripides was censured by the criticks of his time, for making his chief characters too wicked: for example, Phædra, though she loved her son-in-law with reluctancy, and that it was a curse upon her family for offending Venus, yet was thought too ill a pattern for the stage. Shall we, therefore, banish all characters of villany? I confess I am not of that opinion; but it is necessary that the hero of the play be not a villain: that is, the characters which should move our pity ought to have virtuous inclinations, and degrees of moral goodness in them. As for a perfect character of virtue, it never was in nature; and therefore there can be no imitation of it. But there are allays of frailty to be allowed for the chief persons; yet so that the good which is in them shall outweigh

the bad, and consequently leave room for punishment on the one side, and pity on the other.

After all, if any one will ask me, whether a tragedy cannot be made upon any other grounds, than those of exciting pity and terrour in us ;—Bossu, the best of modern criticks, answers thus in general : that all excellent arts, and particularly that of poetry, have been invented and brought to perfection by men of a transcendent genius ; and that therefore, they who practise afterwards the same arts, are obliged to tread in their footsteps, and to search in their writings the foundation of them ; for it is not just that new rules should destroy the authority of the old. But Rapin writes more particularly thus : that no passions in a story are so proper to move our concernment as fear and pity ; and that it is from our concernment we receive our pleasure, is undoubted : when the soul becomes agitated with fear for one character, or hope for another, then it is that we are pleased in tragedy, by the interest which we take in their adventures.

Here, therefore, the general answer may be given to the first question, how far we ought to imitate Shakspeare and Fletcher in their plots ; namely, that we ought to follow them so far only, as they have copied the excellencies of those who invented and brought to perfection dramatick poetry : those things only excepted, which religion, customs of countries, idioms of languages, &c.

have altered in the superstructures, but not in the foundation of the design.

How defective Shakspeare and Fletcher have been in all their plots, Mr. Rymer has discovered in his Criticisms ; neither can we, who follow them, be excused from the same or greater errors ; which are the more unpardonable in us, because we want their beauty to countervail our faults. The best of their designs, the most approaching to antiquity, and the most conducing to move pity, is *THE KING AND NO KING* ; which, if the farce of Bessus were thrown away, is of that inferior sort of tragedies, which end with a prosperous event. It is probably derived from the story of Oedipus, with the character of Alexander the Great, in his extravagancies, given to Arbaces. The taking of this play amongst many others, I cannot wholly ascribe to the excellency of the action ; for I find it moving when it is read : it is true, the faults of the plot are so evidently proved, that they can no longer be denied. The beauties of it must therefore lie either in the lively touches of the passions, or we must conclude, as I think we may, that even in imperfect plots, there are less degrees of nature, by which some faint emotions of pity and terrour are raised in us : as a less engine will raise a less proportion of weight, though not so much as one of Archimedes' making ; for nothing can move our nature, but by some natural reason which works upon [our] passions ; and since

we acknowledge the effect, there must be something in the cause.

The difference between Shakspeare and Fletcher in their plotting, seems to be this ; that Shakspeare generally moves more terrour, and Fletcher more compassion : for the first had a more masculine, a bolder and more fiery genius ; the second a more soft and womanish. In the mechanick beauties of the plot, which are the observation of the three unities, time, place, and action, they are both deficient ; but Shakspeare most. Ben Jonson reformed those errors in his comedies, yet one of Shakspeare's was regular before him ; which is, *THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR*.⁸ For what remains concerning the design, you are to be referred to our English critick.* That method which he has prescribed to raise it, from mistake or ignorance of the crime, is certainly the best, though it is not the only ; for amongst all the tragedies of Sophocles, there is but one, (*OEDIPUS*) which is wholly built after that model.

After the plot, which is the foundation of the play, the next thing to which we ought to apply our judgment is the manners ; for now the poet comes to work above ground : the ground-work

⁸ *THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR* was certainly not produced till after *EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR* ; and probably not till after *EVERY MAN OUT OF HIS HUMOUR* had been acted. The former of these two pieces was acted in 1598, and the other in 1599.

* Rymer.

indeed is that which is most necessary, as that upon which depends the firmness of the whole fabrick ; yet it strikes not the eye so much, as the beauties or imperfections of the manners, the thoughts, and the expressions.

The first rule which Bossu prescribes to the writer of an heroick poem, and which holds too by the same reason in all dramattick poetry, is, to make the moral of the work ; that is, to lay down to yourself what that precept of morality shall be which you would insinuate into the people ; as namely, Homer's (which I have copied in my CONQUEST OF GRANADA) was, that union preserves a commonwealth, and discord destroys it ; Sophocles, in his OEDIPUS, that no man is to be accounted happy before his death. It is the moral that directs the whole action of the play to one centre ; and that action or fable is the example built upon the moral, which confirms the truth of it to our experience. When the fable is designed, then, and not before, the persons are to be introduced with their manners, characters, and passions.

The manners, in a poem, are understood to be those inclinations, whether natural or acquired, which move and carry us to actions, good, bad, or indifferent, in a play ; or which incline the persons to such or such actions. I have anticipated part of this discourse already, in declaring that a poet ought not to make the manners perfectly good in his best persons ; but neither are they to be more wicked in any of his characters, than necessity

requires. To produce a villain without other reason than a natural inclination to villany, is in poetry, to produce an effect without a cause; and to make him more a villain than he has just reason to be, is to make an effect which is stronger than the cause.

The manners arise from many causes; and are either distinguished by complexion, as cholerick and phlegmatick, or by the differences of age or sex, of climates, or quality of the persons, or their present condition. They are likewise to be gathered from the several virtues, vices, or passions, and many other common-places which a poet must be supposed to have learned from natural philosophy, ethicks, and history; of all which whosoever is ignorant, does not deserve the name of poet.

But as the manners are useful in this art, they may be all comprised under these general heads: First, they must be apparent; that is, in every character of the play some inclinations of the person must appear; and these are shewn in the actions and discourse. Secondly, the manners must be suitable or agreeing to the persons; that is, to the age, sex, dignity, and the other general heads of manners: thus, when a poet has given the dignity of a king to one of his persons, in all his actions and speeches that person must discover majesty, magnanimity, and jealousy of power; because these are suitable to the general manners of a king. The third property of manners is resemblance; and this is founded upon the par-

ticular characters of men, as we have them delivered to us by relation or history: that is, when a poet has the known character of this or that man before him, he is bound to represent him such, at least not contrary to that which fame has reported him to have been. Thus it is not a poet's choice to make Ulysses cholerick, or Achilles patient, because Homer has described them quite otherwise. Yet this is a rock on which ignorant writers daily split; and the absurdity is as monstrous, as if a painter should draw a coward running from a battle, and tell us it was the picture of Alexander the Great.—The last property of manners is, that they be constant and equal, that is, maintained the same through the whole design: thus, when Virgil had once given the name of *pious* to Æneas, he was bound to shew him such, in all his words and actions throughout the whole poem. All these properties Horace has hinted to a judicious observer: 1. *Notandi sunt tibi mores*; 2. *Aut famam sequere*, 3. *aut sibi convenientia finge*; 4. *Servetur ad imum, qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet*.

From the manners the characters of persons are derived; for indeed, the characters are no other than the inclinations as they appear in the several persons of the poem: a character being thus defined,—*that which distinguishes one man from another*. Not to repeat the same things over again, which have been said of the manners, I will only add what is necessary here.

A character, or that which distinguishes one man from all others, cannot be supposed to consist of one particular virtue, or vice, or passion only; but it is a composition of qualities which are not contrary to one another in the same person: thus the same man may be liberal and valiant, but not liberal and covetous; so in a comical character, or humour, (which is an inclination to this or that particular folly,) Falstaff is a liar, and a coward, a glutton, and a buffoon, because all these qualities may agree in the same man. Yet it is still to be observed, that one virtue, vice, and passion, ought to be shewn in every man, as predominant over all the rest; as covetousness in Crassus, love of his country in Brutus; and the same in characters which are feigned.

The chief character or hero in a tragedy, as I have already shewn, ought in prudence to be such a man, who has so much more in him of virtue than of vice, that he may be left amiable to the audience, which otherwise cannot have any concernment for his sufferings; and it is on this one character that the pity and terrour must be principally, if not wholly, founded: a rule which is extremely necessary, and which none of the criticks that I know, have fully enough discovered to us. For terrour and compassion work but weakly, when they are divided into many persons. If Creon had been the chief character in OEDIPUS, there had neither been terrour nor compassion moved; but only detestation of the man, and joy

for his punishment ; if Adrastus and Eurydice had been made more appearing characters, then the pity had been divided, and lessened on the part of Oedipus ; but making Oedipus the best and bravest person, and even Jocasta but an under-part to him, his virtues and the punishment of his fatal crime, drew both the pity and the terrour to himself.

By what had been said of the manners it will be easy for a reasonable man to judge, whether the characters be truly or falsely drawn in a tragedy ; for if there be no manners appearing in the characters, no concernment for the persons can be raised ; no pity or horror can be moved, but by vice or virtue ; therefore, without them no person can have business in the play. If the inclinations be obscure, it is a sign the poet is in the dark, and knows not what manner of man he presents to you ; and consequently you can have no idea, or very imperfect, of that man ; nor can judge what resolutions he ought to take, or what words or actions are proper for him. Most comedies made up of accidents, or adventures, are liable to fall into this error ; and tragedies, with many turns, are subject to it : for the manners never can be evident, where the surprises of fortune take up all the business of the stage, and where the poet is more in pain to tell you what happened to such a man, than what he was. It is one of the excellencies of Shakspeare, that the manners of his persons are generally

apparent, and you see their bent and inclinations. Fletcher comes far short of him in this, as indeed he does almost in every thing; there are but glimmerings of manners in most of his comedies, which run upon adventures; and in his tragedies, Rollo, Otto, the King-and-No-King, Melantius,⁹ and many others of his best, are but pictures shewn you in the twilight; you know not whether they resemble vice or virtue; and they are either good, bad, or indifferent, as the present scene requires it. But of all poets, this commendation is to be given to Ben Jonson, that the manners, even of the most inconsiderable persons in his plays, are every where apparent.

By considering the second quality of manners, which is that they be suitable to the age, quality, country, dignity, &c. of the character, we may likewise judge whether a poet has followed nature. In this kind Sophocles and Euripides have more excelled among the Greeks, than Æschylus; and Terence more than Plautus among the Romans; thus Sophocles gives to Oedipus the true qualities of a king, in both those plays which bear his name; but in the latter, which is the OEDIPUS COLONEUS, he lets fall on purpose his tragick style; his hero speaks not in the arbitrary tone, but remembers, in the softness of his complaints, that

⁹ Melantius is a character in THE MAID'S TRAGEDY; Otto, in ROLLO, or, as it was sometimes entitled—THE BLOODY BROTHER.

he is an unfortunate old man ; that he is banished from his country, and persecuted by his next relations. The present French poets are generally accused, that wheresoever they lay the scene, or in whatsoever age, the manners of their heroes are wholly French : Racine's Bajazet is bred at Constantinople, but his civilities are conveyed to him by some secret passage from Versailles into the Seraglio. But our Shakspeare, having ascribed to Henry the Fourth the character of a king, and of a father, gives him the perfect manners of each relation, when either he transacts with his son, or with his subjects. Fletcher, on the other side, gives neither to Arbaces, nor to his king in *THE MAID'S TRAGEDY*, the qualities which are suitable to a monarch ; though he may be excused a little in the latter, for the king there is not uppermost in the character ; it is the lover of Evadne, who is king only in a second consideration ; and though he be unjust, and has other faults which shall be nameless, yet he is not the hero of the play. It is true, we find him a lawful prince, (though I never heard of any king that was in Rhodes,) and therefore Mr. Rymer's criticism stands good,—that he should not be shewn in so vicious a character. Sophocles has been more judicious in his *ANTI-GONA* ; for though he represent in Creon a bloody prince, yet he makes him not a lawful king, but an usurper ; and Antigona herself is the heroine of the tragedy : but when Philaster wounds Arethusa and the boy, and Perigot his mistress in

THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS, both these are contrary to the character of manhood: nor is Valentinian managed much better; for though Fletcher has taken his picture truly, and shewn him as he was, an effeminate voluptuous man, yet he has forgotten that he was an emperor, and has given him none of those royal marks which ought to appear in a lawful successor of the throne. If it be enquired, what Fletcher should have done on this occasion; ought he not to have represented Valentinian as he was;—Bossu shall answer this question for me, by an instance of the like nature: Mauritius, the Greek emperor, was a prince far surpassing Valentinian, for he was endued with many kingly virtues; he was religious, merciful, and valiant, but withal he was noted of extreme covetousness, a vice which is contrary to the character of a hero, or a prince; therefore, says the critick, that emperor was no fit person to be represented in a tragedy, unless his good qualities were only to be shewn, and his covetousness, which sullied them all, were slurred over by the artifice of the poet.—To return once more to Shakspeare; no man ever drew so many characters, or generally distinguished them better from one another, excepting only Jonson. I will

¹ Here our author has made some amends for his unjust censure of Shakspeare in this respect, in a former Essay. See p. 195. "His CHARACTERS (Mr. Pope truly observes), are so much Nature herself, that it is a sort of

instance but in one, to shew the copiousness of his invention; it is that of Caliban, or the Monster, in *THE TEMPEST*. He seems there to have created a person which was not in nature, a boldness which at first sight would appear intolerable; for he makes him a species of himself,

injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shews that they received them from one another, and were but multipliers of the same image: each picture, like a mock-rainbow, is but the reflexion of a reflexion. But every single character in Shakspeare is as much an individual as those in life itself: it is impossible to find any two alike; and such as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will, upon comparison, be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of character, we must add the wonderful preservation of it; which is such throughout his plays, that, had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker."

If this last observation should be thought exaggerated praise, enough will yet remain in the passage here quoted, to shew that our author's amended opinion is perfectly just, and his former censure altogether groundless.— "I will not" (says Dr. Johnson) "say with Pope, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are, which have nothing characteristic; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice."

begotten by an incubus on a witch; but this, as I have elsewhere proved,^a is not wholly beyond the bounds of credibility, at least the vulgar still believe it. We have the separated notions of a spirit, and of a witch; (and spirits, according to Plato, are vested with a subtile body; according to some of his followers, have different sexes;) therefore, as from the distinct apprehensions of a horse and of a man, imagination has formed a centaur, so from those of an incubus and a sorceress, Shakspeare has produced his monster. Whether or no his generation can be defended, I leave to philosophy; but of this I am certain,—that the poet has most judiciously furnished him with a person, a language, and a character, which will suit him, both by father's and mother's side: he has all the discontents and malice of a witch, and of a devil, besides a convenient proportion of the deadly sins; gluttony, sloth, and lust, are manifest: the dejectedness of a slave is likewise given him, and the ignorance of one bred up in a desert island. His person is monstrous, as he is the product of unnatural lust; and his language is as hobgoblin as his person: in all things he is distinguished from other mortals.—The characters of Fletcher are poor and narrow, in comparison of Shakspeare's; I remember not one which is not borrowed from him, unless you will except that strange mixture of a man in *THE KING AND NO*

^a See the Essay on Heroick Plays, p. 216.

KING: so that in this part Shakspeare is generally worth our imitation; and to imitate Fletcher is but to copy after him who was a copier.

Under this general head of manners the passions are naturally included, as belonging to the characters. I speak not of pity and of terrour, which are to be moved in the audience by the plot; but of anger, hatred, love, ambition, jealousy, revenge, &c. as they are shewn in this or that person of the play. To describe these naturally, and to move them artfully, is one of the greatest commendations which can be given to a poet: to write pathetically, says Longinus, cannot proceed but from a lofty genius. A poet must be born with this quality; yet, unless he help himself by an acquired knowledge of the passions, what they are in their own nature, and by what springs they are to be moved, he will be subject either to raise them where they ought not be raised, or not to raise them by the just degrees of nature, or to amplify them beyond the natural bounds, or not to observe the crisis and turns of them in their cooling and decay; all which errours proceed from want of judgment in the poet, and from being unskilled in the principles of moral philosophy. Nothing is more frequent in a fanciful writer, than to foil himself by not managing his strength: therefore, as in a wrestler, there is first required some measure of force, a well-knit body, and active limbs, without which all instruction would be vain, yet, these being granted, if he want the skill which is

necessary to a wrestler, he shall make but small advantage of his natural robustuousness; so, in a poet, his inborn vehemence and force of spirit will only run him out of breath the sooner, if it be not supported by the help of art. The roar of passion, indeed, may please an audience, three parts of which are ignorant enough to think all is moving which is noise, and it may stretch the lungs of an ambitious actor, who will die upon the spot for a thundering clap; but it will move no other passion than indignation and contempt from judicious men. Longinus, whom I have hitherto followed, continues thus: if the passions be artfully employed, the discourse becomes vehement and lofty; if otherwise, there is nothing more ridiculous than a great passion out of season. And to this purpose he animadvertes severely upon Æschylus, who writ nothing in cold blood, but was always in a rapture, and in fury with his audience; the inspiration was still upon him, he was ever tearing it upon the tripos; or, (to run off as madly as he does, from one similitude to another,) he was always at high flood of passion, even in the dead ebb and lowest water-mark of the scene. He who would raise the passion of a judicious audience, says a learned critick, must be sure to take his hearers along with him; if they be in a calm, it is in vain for him to be in a huff: he must move them by degrees, and kindle with them, otherwise he will be in danger of setting his own heap of stubble on a fire, and of burning

out by himself without warming the company that stand about him. They who would justify the madness of poetry from the authority of Aristotle, have mistaken the text, and consequently the interpretation: I imagine it to be false read, where he says of poetry, that it is εὐφῶνς ἢ μανικῶν, that it had always somewhat in it either of a genius, or of a madman. It is more probable that the original ran thus, that poetry was εὐφῶνς ἢ μανικῶν, that it belongs to a witty man, but not to a madman.* Thus then the passions, as they are considered simply and in themselves, suffer violence when they are perpetually maintained at the same height; for what melody can be made on that instrument, all whose strings are screwed up at first to their utmost stretch, and to the same sound? But this is not the worst; for the characters likewise bear a part in the general calamity, if you consider the passions as embodied in them: for it follows of necessity, that no man can be distinguished from another by his discourse, when every man is ranting, swaggering, and exclaiming with the same excess, as if it were the only business of all the characters to contend with each other for the prize at Billingsgate, or that the scene of the tragedy lay in Bedlam. Suppose the

* Mr. Tyrwhitt (Aristot. de Poeticâ, p. 184. Oxon. 1794) thinks the original the true reading; and that it here means—*rather than*. His interpretation is—“*poetica ingeniosi est hominis opus magis quam insani* (ellipsis scilicet τῷ ΜΑΛΛΟΝ Atticis scriptoribus satis usitata.)”

poet should intend this man to be cholerick, and that man to be patient; yet when they are confounded in the writing, you cannot distinguish them from one another: for the man who was called patient and tame, is only so before he speaks; but let his clack be set a-going, and he shall tongue it as impetuously, and as loudly, as the arrantest hero of the play. By this means the characters are only distinct in name; but in reality all the men and women in the play are the same person. No man should pretend to write, who cannot temper his fancy with his judgment; nothing is more dangerous to a raw horseman than a hot-mouthed jade without a curb.

It is necessary therefore for a poet, who would concern an audience by describing of a passion, first to prepare it, and not to rush upon it all at once. Ovid has judiciously shewn the difference of these two ways in the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses. Ajax from the very beginning breaks out into his exclamations, and is swearing by his maker;—*Agimus, proh Jupiter, inquit*. Ulysses, on the contrary, prepares his audience with all the submissiveness he can practise, and all the calmness of a reasonable man; he found his judges in a tranquillity of spirit, and therefore set out leisurely and softly with them, till he had warmed them by degrees, and then he began to mend his pace, and to draw them along with his own impetuosity; yet so managing his breath, that it might not fail him at his need, and reserving his utmost proofs of ability even to the last. The

success, you see, was answerable ; for the croud only applauded the speech of Ajax,—*vulgique secutum ultima murmur erat* ; but the judges awarded the prize for which they contended, to Ulysses :

*Mota manus procerum est ; et quid facundia posset,
Tum patuit, fortisque viri tulit arma disertus.*

The next necessary rule is, to put nothing into the discourse, which may hinder your moving of the passions. Too many accidents, as I have said, incumber the poet as much as the arms of Saul did David ; for the variety of passions which they produce are ever crossing and justling each other out of the way. He who treats of joy and grief together, is in a fair way of causing neither of those effects. There is yet another obstacle to be removed, which is pointed wit, and sentences affected out of season ; these are nothing of kin to the violence of passion : no man is at leisure to make sentences and similes, when his soul is in an agony. I the rather name this fault, that it may serve to mind me of my former errors ; neither will I spare myself, but give an example of this kind from my INDIAN EMPEROR. Montezuma, pursued by his enemies, and seeking sanctuary, stands parlying without the fort, and describing his danger to Cydaria, in a simile of six lines :

As on the sands the frightened traveller
Sees the high seas come rolling from afar, &c.

My Indian potentate was well skilled in the sea for an inland prince, and well improved since the first act, when he sent his son to discover it.

The image had not been amiss from another man at another time ; *sed nunc non erat his locus* : he destroyed the concernment which the audience might otherwise have had for him ; for they could not think the danger near, when he had the leisure to invent a simile.

If Shakspeare be allowed, as I think he must, to have made his characters distinct, it will easily be inferred that he understood the nature of the passions ; because it has been proved already, that confused passions make undistinguishable characters. Yet I cannot deny that he has his failings ; but they are not so much in the passions themselves, as in his manner of expression : he often obscures his meaning by his words, and sometimes makes it unintelligible. I will not say of so great a poet, that he distinguished not the blown puffy style, from true sublimity ; but I may venture to maintain, that the fury of his fancy often transported him beyond the bounds of judgment, either in coining of new words and phrases, or racking words which were in use into the violence of a catachresis. It is not that I would explode the use of metaphors from passion, for Longinus thinks them necessary to raise it ; but to use them at every word, to say nothing without a metaphor, a simile, an image, or description, is, I doubt, to smell a little too strongly of the buskin. I must be forced to give an example of expressing passion figuratively ; but that I may do it with respect to Shakspeare, it shall not be taken from

any thing of his : it is an exclamation against Fortune, quoted in his *HAMLET*, but written by some other poet :³

“ Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods
 “ In general synod, take away her power ;
 “ Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
 “ And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
 “ As low as to the fiends.”

³ I once thought, with our author, (as I have elsewhere observed,) that these lines were extracted from some more ancient play, of which it appeared to me probable that Christopher Marlowe was the writer ; but whatever may have been Shakspeare's view in introducing them in *HAMLET*, I am now decidedly of opinion, that they were written by himself, not in any former unsuccessful piece, but expressly for that tragedy.

Dr. Warburton had a *fancy*, that the commendation bestowed on the play from which these lines are supposed to be taken, was given in order “ to upbraid the false taste of the audience at that time, which could not suffer them to do justice to the simplicity and sublime of this production.” And his notion was, that the play in question “ was Shakspeare's own, and this was the occasion of writing it. He was desirous, as soon as he had found his strength, of restoring the chastness and regularity of the ancient stage, and therefore composed this tragedy on the model of the Greek drama, as may be seen by his throwing so much into action. But his attempt proved fruitless ; and the raw unnatural taste, then prevalent, forced him back again into his old Gothick manner. For which, he took this revenge upon his audience.”—This *fancy* Dr. Warburton has endeavoured to support in a dissertation, so little satisfactory, that I doubt whether in

And immediately after, speaking of Hecuba, when Priam was killed before her eyes :

“ But who, ah woe! had seen the mabled queen
“ Run bare-foot up and down, threat’ning the flame
“ With bisson rheum ; a clout about that head,

fifty years it ever made one convert to his opinion. To prove that Shakspeare himself considered the first of the passages quoted by Dryden, as bombast, he maintains, that “ Shakspeare has used the very same thought clothed in the same expression, in one of his best plays, and given it to a principal character, where he aims at the sublime.” Thus the Egyptian Queen, in ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, (according to him,) rails at Fortune in the same manner :

“ No, let me speak, and let me rail so high,
“ That *the false housewife, Fortune, break her wheel,*
“ Provoked at my offence.”

But Mr. Steevens has observed, that it is by no means proved in this dissertation, “ that *Shakspeare has employed the same thoughts clothed in the same expressions in his best plays.* If he bids *the false housewife, Fortune, break her wheel,* he does not desire her to *break all its spokes, nay even its periphery ; and make use of the nave afterwards for such an immeasurable cast!* Though, if what Dr. Warburton has said should be found in any instance to be exactly true, what can we infer from thence, but that Shakspeare was sometimes wrong in spite of conviction ; and in the hurry of writing committed those very faults which his judgment could correct in others ?”

The poet, in the speeches spoken by the Player in HAMLET, (act ii. sc. 2.) Mr. Steevens thinks “ might have meant to exhibit a just resemblance of some of the plays of his own age, in which the faults were too glaring to permit a few splendid passages to atone for them.”

"Where late the diadem stood ; and, for a robe,
 "About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
 "A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up ;
 "Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd
 "'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd;
 "But if the gods themselves did see her then,
 "When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
 "In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs ;
 "The instant burst of clamour that she made
 "(Unless things mortal move them not at all)
 "Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
 "And passion in the gods."

What a pudder is here kept in raising the expression of trifling thoughts ! Would not a man have thought that the poet had been bound 'prentice to a wheel-wright for his first rant ? and had followed a ragman, for the clout and blanket, in the second ? Fortune is painted on a wheel, and therefore the writer, in a rage, will have poetical justice done upon every member of that engine ; after this execution, he bowls the nave downhill, from heaven to the fiends ; (an unreasonable long mark a man would think ;) it is well there are no solid orbs to stop it in the way, or no element of fire to consume it ; but when it came to the earth, it must be monstrous heavy, to break ground as low as to the centre. His *making milch the burning eyes of heaven* was a pretty tolerable flight too, and I think no man ever drew milk out of eyes before him ; yet to make the wonder greater, these eyes were burning. Such a sight, indeed, were enough to have raised passion in the

gods ; but to excuse the effects of it, he tells you, perhaps they did not see it. Wise men would be glad to find a little sense couched under all those pompous words, for bombast is commonly the delight of that audience which loves poetry, but understands it not ; and as commonly has been the practice of those writers, who, not being able to infuse a natural passion into the mind, have made it their business to ply the ears, and to stun their judges by the noise. But Shakspeare does not often thus ; for the passions in his scene between Brutus and Cassius are extremely natural, the thoughts are such as arise from the matter, and the expression of them not viciously figurative. I cannot leave this subject before I do justice to that divine poet, by giving you one of his passionate descriptions ; it is of Richard the Second, when he was deposed, and led in triumph through the streets of London by Henry of Bolingbroke : the painting of it is so lively, and the words so moving, that I have scarce read any thing comparable to it in any other language. Suppose you have seen already the fortunate usurper passing through the crowd, and followed by the shouts and acclamations of the people ; and now behold King Richard entering upon the scene : consider the wretchedness of his condition, and his carriage in it, and refrain from pity, if you can :

“ As in a theatre, the eyes of men,

“ After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,

“ Are idly bent on him that enters next,

" Thinking his prattle to be tedious,—
 " Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
 " Did scowl on Richard : no man cry'd—God save him ;
 " No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home ;
 " But dust was thrown upon his sacred head,
 " Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,
 " His face still combating with tears and smiles,
 " The badges of his grief and patience,—
 " That had not God, for some strong purpose, steel'd
 " The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
 " And barbarism itself have pitied him."

To speak justly of this whole matter,—it is neither height of thought that is discommended, nor pathetick vehemence, nor any nobleness of expression in its proper place ; but it is a false measure of all these, something which is like them and is not them : it is the Bristol stone, which appears like a diamond ; it is an extravagant thought, instead of a sublime one ; it is roaring madness, instead of vehemence ; and a sound of words, instead of sense. If Shakspeare were stripped of all the bombast in his passions,* and

* Pope had a singular notion on this subject, which Mr. Spence has preserved in his ANECDOTES :

" Shakspeare generally used to stiffen his style with high words and metaphors, for the speeches of kings and great men : he mistook it for a mark of greatness. This is strongest in his early plays ; but in his very last, OTHELLO, what a forced language has he put into the mouth of the Duke of Venice ! This was the way of Chapman, Massinger, and all the tragick writers of those days."

dressed in the most vulgar words, we should find the beauties of his thoughts remaining; if his embroideries were burnt down, there would still be silver at the bottom of the melting-pot: but I fear (at least, let me fear it for myself), that we who ape his sounding words have nothing of his thought, but are all outside; there is not so much as a dwarf within our giant's clothes. Therefore, let not Shakspeare suffer for our sakes; it is our

Shakspeare may perhaps have thought that a certain stateliness of expression was suited to royalty; yet Mr. Pope's notion does not appear to me to be altogether just. The language of King John, Richard the Second, Richard the Third, Henry the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth, and Henry the Eighth, is not more metaphorical than that of the other considerable personages introduced in the various plays in which they appear. Which were Shakspeare's early and which his late productions, Pope undoubtedly did not know; for he believed *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*, which appeared in 1602, or before, to be one of his latest dramas; and in the passage just quoted he decisively pronounces *OTHELLO* to have been his *last* play; whereas in truth it was written (as I shall hereafter prove) in 1604, twelve years before his death.—In the period between the years 1604 and 1607, this great poet seems to have attained “the full meridian of his glory.” In this short interval, he appears to have produced his three most splendid tragedies, *OTHELLO*, *MACBETH*, and *KING LEAR*.

Mr. Pope's notion, that Shakspeare *stiffened his style for kings and great men*, I suspect was derived from the play of *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*, where, in the speeches of Agamemnon, Nestor, Ulysses, &c. a good deal of this *stiffened* language may certainly be found.

fault, who succeed him in an age which is more refined, if we imitate him so ill, that we copy his failings only, and make a virtue of that in our writings, which in his was an imperfection.

For what remains, the excellency of that poet was, as I have said, in the more manly passions, Fletcher's in the softer: Shakspeare writ better betwixt man and man, Fletcher betwixt man and woman; consequently, the one described friendship better, the other love; yet Shakspeare taught Fletcher to write love; and Juliet and Desdemona are originals. It is true, the scholar had the softer soul; but the master had the kinder. Friendship is both a virtue and a passion essentially; love is a passion only in its nature, and is not a virtue but by accident: good nature makes friendship, but effeminacy love. Shakspeare had an universal mind, which comprehended all characters and passions; Fletcher a more confined and limited; for though he treated love in perfection, yet honour, ambition, revenge, and generally all the stronger passions, he either touched not, or not masterly. To conclude all, he was a limb of Shakspeare.

I had intended to have proceeded to the last property of manners, which is, that they must be constant, and the characters maintained the same from the beginning to the end; and from thence to have proceeded to the thoughts and expressions suitable to a tragedy; but I will first see how this will relish with the age. It is, I confess, but

cursorily written ; yet the judgment which is given here, is generally founded upon experience. But because many men are shocked at the name of rules, as if they were a kind of magisterial prescription upon poets, I will conclude with the words of Rapin, in his reflections on Aristotle's work of poetry : " If the rules be well considered, we shall find them to be made only to reduce nature into method, to trace her step by step, and not to suffer the least mark of her to escape us. It is only by these that probability in fiction is maintained, which is the soul of poetry. They are founded upon good sense and sound reason, rather than on authority ; for though Aristotle and Horace are produced, yet no man must argue that what they write is true, because they writ it ; but it is evident, by the ridiculous mistakes and gross absurdities which have been made by those poets who have taken their fancy only for their guide, that if this fancy be not regulated, it is a mere caprice, and utterly incapable to produce a reasonable and judicious poem." *

* In this Essay our author has asserted, that Shakspeare has often obscured his meaning, and sometimes rendered it unintelligible, by his expressions ; and that his fancy out-ran his judgment, " either in coining of new words and phrases, or racking words which were in use, into the violence of a catachresis." In vindication of our great dramattick poet, it may be observed, without any disrespect to this ingenious and acute critick, that clearness and obscurity are relative terms, and that what he

has censured as unintelligible, might perhaps have appeared to him perfectly clear, if he had been more conversant with the language, customs, and manners of Shakspeare's age, and of a preceding period. I much doubt, whether in all his plays, twenty words of his own coinage can be found; and whether the words and phrases which our author would have objected to, were new or old, he appears to have had no means of ascertaining, for the reason already assigned.

HEADS
OF
AN ANSWER TO RYMER:

FIRST PRINTED IN OCTAVO, IN 1711.

Thomas Rymer, in 1678, published a tract, entitled "The Tragedies of the last Age considered and examined by the Practice of the Ancients, and the Common Sense of all Ages." To this Essay, the chief object of which was to expose the faults of three of Beaumont's and Fletcher's plays, *ROLLO*, (if that play be their joint production, which may be doubted,) *THE MAID'S TRAGEDY*, and *KING AND NO KING*, Dryden appears to have intended to write an Answer; for a copy of Rymer's book having been presented to him by the author, he wrote on the blank leaves at the beginning and end of the volume, the following Observations, which it is to be regretted he did not afterwards enlarge and methodize. This volume, after his death, falling into the hands of the publisher of the works of Beaumont and Fletcher in 1711, he prefixed these remarks to that edition; and they were again published by Dr. Johnson, in the *LIFE OF DRYDEN*, from the original copy, which had fallen into the hands of Mr. Garrick.

There is a considerable variation between the two editions, in the arrangement of the paragraphs; but not having seen the original, I am unable to ascertain which arrangement is most conformable to the writer's intention. The variation was probably occasioned by these remarks being found at the beginning and end of Rymer's book; and perhaps those which were found in the beginning, were written last.—I have followed Dr. Johnson's arrangement, though I have some doubt whether it be correct.

HEADS
OF
AN ANSWER TO RYMER'S REMARKS
ON
THE TRAGEDIES OF THE LAST AGE.⁵

THAT we may the less wonder why pity and terroure are not now the only springs on which our tragedies move, and that Shakspeare may be more excused, Rapin confesses that the French tragedies now all run on the *tendre*; and gives the reason, because love is the passion which most predominates in our souls; and that therefore the passions represented become insipid, unless they are conformable to the thoughts of the audience.

⁵ Mr. Spence, addressing Pope, observed, that Rymer was a learned and strict critick. "Ay," replied Pope, "that's exactly his character. He is generally right, though rather too severe in his opinion of the particular plays he speaks of; and is, on the whole, one of the best criticks we ever had." Spence's ANECDOTES.

In citing the *dictum* of this great poet, that Rymer is *generally right*, I by no means wish it should be understood that I subscribe to his opinion.

But it is to be concluded, that this passion works not now amongst the French so strongly, as the other two did amongst the ancients. Amongst us, who have a stronger genius for writing, the operations from the writing are much stronger; for the raising of Shakspeare's passions is more from the excellency of the words and thoughts, than the justness of the occasion;⁶ and if he has been able to pick single occasions, he has never founded the whole reasonably; yet, by the genius of poetry in writing, he has succeeded.

Rapin attributes more to the *dictio*, that is, to the words and discourse of a tragedy, than Aristotle has done, who places them in the last rank of beauties; perhaps, only last in order, because they are the last product of the design, of the disposition or connection of its parts, of the characters, of the manners of those characters, and of the thoughts proceeding from those manners. Rapin's words are remarkable:—It is not the admirable intrigue, the surprising events, and extraordinary incidents, that make the beauty of a tragedy; it is the discourses, when they are natural and passionate.—So are Shakspeare's.

The parts of a poem, tragick or heroick, are,

1. The fable itself.
2. The order or manner of its contrivance, in relation of the parts to the whole.

⁶ With what truth can this be said of ROMEO AND JULIET, MACBETH, KING LEAR, and OTHELLO?

3. The manners, or decency of the characters, in speaking or acting what is proper for them, and proper to be shewn by the poet.

4. The thoughts, which express the manners.

5. The words, which express those thoughts.

In the last of these, Homer excels Virgil; Virgil all other ancient poets; and Shakspeare all modern poets.⁷

For the second of these, the order: the meaning is, that a fable ought to have a beginning, middle, and an end, all just and natural; so that that part, *e. g.* which is the middle, could not naturally be the beginning or end, and so of the rest: all depend on one another, like the links of a curious chain. If terroure and pity are only to be raised, certainly this author follows Aristotle's rules, and Sophocles' and Euripides's example; but joy may be raised too, and that doubly, either by seeing a wicked man punished, or a good man at last fortunate; or perhaps indignation, to see wickedness prosperous, and goodness depressed: both these may be profitable to the end of tragedy, reformation of manners; but the last improperly, only as it begets pity in the audience; though Aristotle, I confess, places tragedies of this kind in the second form.

He who undertakes to answer this excellent critique of Mr. Rymer, in behalf of our English

⁷ If our author had said—"In the last *three* of these Shakspeare excels all modern poets," he would, I conceive, have been nearer to the truth.

poets against the Greek, ought to do it in this manner : either by yielding to him the greatest part of what he contends for, which consists in this, that the *μύθος*, *i. e.* the design and conduct of it, is more conducing in the Greeks to those ends of tragedy, which Aristotle and he propose, namely, to cause terrour and pity ; yet the granting this does not set the Greeks above the English poets.

But the answerer ought to prove two things ; first, that the fable is not the greatest masterpiece of a tragedy, though it be the foundation of it.

Secondly, that other ends, as suitable to the nature of tragedy may be found in the English, which were not in the Greek.

Aristotle places the fable first ; not *quoad dignitatem*, sed *quoad fundamentum* : for a fable, never so movingly contrived to those ends of his, pity and terrour, will operate nothing on our affections, except the characters, manners, thoughts, and words, are suitable.

So that it remains for Mr. Rymer to prove, that in all those, or the greatest part of them, we are inferior to Sophocles and Euripides ; and this he has offered at, in some measure ; but, I think, a little partially to the ancients.

For the fable itself : it is in the English more adorned with episodes, and larger than in the Greek poets ; consequently more diverting. For if the action be but one, and that plain, without

any counter-turn of design or episode, *i. e.* under-plot, how can it be so pleasing as the English, which have both under-plot and a turned design, which keeps the audience in expectation of the catastrophe? whereas in the Greek poets we see through the whole design at first.

For the characters, they are neither so many nor so various in Sophocles and Euripides, as in Shakspeare and Fletcher; only they are more adapted to those ends of tragedy which Aristotle commends to us, pity and terrour.

The manners flow from the characters, and consequently must partake of their advantages and disadvantages.

The thoughts and words, which are the fourth and fifth beauties of tragedy, are certainly more noble and more poetical in the English than in the Greek, which must be proved by comparing them somewhat more equitably than Mr. Rymer has done.

After all, we need not yield that the English way is less conducing to move pity and terrour, because they often shew virtue oppressed and vice punished; where they do not both, or either, they are not to be defended.

And if we should grant that the Greeks performed this better, perhaps it may admit of dispute, whether pity and terrour are either the prime, or at least the only ends of tragedy.

It is not enough that Aristotle has said so, for Aristotle drew his models of tragedy from Sopho-

cles and Euripides; and if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind. And chiefly we have to say, (what I hinted on pity and terroure, in the last paragraph save one,) that the punishment of vice and reward of virtue are the most adequate ends of tragedy, because most conducing to good example of life. Now pity is not so easily raised for a criminal, (and the ancient tragedy always represents its chief person such,) as it is for an innocent man; and the suffering of innocence and punishment of the offender is of the nature of English tragedy: contrarily, in the Greek, innocence is unhappy often, and the offender escapes. Then we are not touched with the sufferings of any sort of men so much as of lovers, and this was almost unknown to the ancients: so that they neither administered poetical justice, of which Mr. Rymer boasts, so well as we; neither knew they the best common-place of pity, which is love.

He therefore unjustly blames us for not building on what the ancients left us; for it seems, upon consideration of the premises, that we have wholly finished what they began.

My judgment on this piece is this; that it is extremely learned, but that the author of it is better read in the Greek than in the English poets; that all writers ought to study this critique, as the best account I have ever seen of the ancients; that the model of tragedy he has here given is excellent, and extreme correct; but

that it is not the only model of all tragedy, because it is too much circumscribed in plot, characters, &c. and lastly, that we may be taught here justly to admire and imitate the ancients, without giving them the preference, with this author, in prejudice to our own country.

Want of method in this excellent treatise; makes the thoughts of the author sometimes obscure.

His meaning, that pity and terrour are to be moved, is, that they are to be moved as the means conducing to the ends of tragedy, which are pleasure and instruction.

And these two ends may be thus distinguished. The chief end of the poet is to please; for his immediate reputation depends on it.

The great end of the poem is to instruct, which is performed by making pleasure the vehicle of that instruction; for poesy is an art, and all arts are made to profit. Rapin.

The pity which the poet is to labour for, is for the criminal, not for those or him whom he has murdered, or who have been the occasion of the tragedy. The terrour is likewise in the punishment of the same criminal, who, if he be represented too great an offender, will not be pitied; if altogether innocent, his punishment will be unjust.

Another obscurity is, where he says, Sophocles perfected tragedy by introducing the third actor; that is, he meant, three kinds of action; one

company singing, or speaking; another playing on the musick; a third dancing.

To make a true judgment in this competition betwixt the Greek poets and the English, in tragedy:

Consider, first, how Aristotle has defined a tragedy. Secondly, what he assigns the end of it to be. Thirdly, what he thinks the beauties of it. Fourthly, the means to attain the end proposed.

Compare the Greek and English tragick poets justly, and without partiality, according to those rules.

Then secondly, consider whether Aristotle has made a just definition of tragedy; of its parts, of its ends, and of its beauties; and whether he, having not seen any others but those of Sophocles, Euripides, &c. had, or truly could determine what all the excellencies of tragedy are, and wherein they consist.

Next shew in what ancient tragedy was deficient; for example, in the narrowness of its plots, and fewness of persons; and try whether that be not a fault in the Greek poets, and whether their excellency was so great, when the variety was visibly so little; or whether what they did was not very easy to do.

Then make a judgment on what the English have added to their beauties; as, for example, not only more plot, but also new passions, as, namely, that of love, scarce touched on by the ancients,

except in this one example of Phædra, cited by Mr. Rymer; and in that how short they were of Fletcher.

Prove also that love, being an heroick passion, is fit for tragedy, which cannot be denied, because of the example alledged of Phædra; and how far Shakspeare has outdone them in friendship, &c.

To return to the beginning of this enquiry; consider, if pity and terrour be enough for tragedy to move; and I believe, upon a true definition of tragedy, it will be found that its work extends farther, and that it is to reform manners, by a delightful representation of human life in great persons, by way of dialogue. If this be true, then not only pity and terrour are to be moved, as the only means to bring us to virtue, but generally love to virtue, and hatred to vice, by shewing the rewards of one, and punishments of the other; at least, by rendering virtue always amiable, though it be shewn unfortunate, and vice detestable, though it be shewn triumphant.

If then, the encouragement of virtue, and discouragement of vice, be the proper ends of poetry in tragedy, pity and terrour, though good means, are not the only. For all the passions, in their turns, are to be set in a ferment; as joy, anger, love, fear, are to be used as the poet's common-places, and a general concernment for the principal actors is to be raised, by making them appear such in their characters, their words, and

actions, as will interest the audience in their fortunes.

And if, after all, in a larger sense, pity comprehends this concernment for the good, and terrour includes detestation for the bad, then let us consider whether the English have not answered this end of tragedy, as well as the ancients, or perhaps better.

And here Mr. Rymer's objections against these plays are to be impartially weighed, that we may see whether they are of weight enough to turn the balance against our countrymen.

It is evident, those plays which he arraigns, have moved both those passions in a high degree upon the stage.

To give the glory of this away from the poet, and to place it upon the actors, seems unjust.⁸

One reason is, because whatever actors they have found, the event has been the same, that is, the same passions have been always moved ; which

⁸ " We may remember, (says Rymer,) however we find this scene of Melantius and Amintor written in the book, that at the theatre we have a good scene acted. There is work cut out, and both our *Æsopus* and *Roscius* are on the stage together : whatever defect may be in Amintor and Melantius, Mr. Hart and Mr. Mohun are wanting in nothing. To these we owe for what is pleasing in the scene ; and to this scene we may impute the success of *THE MAID'S TRAGEDY*." Again : " These say, for instance, a *KING AND NO KING* pleases ; I say, the

shews, that there is something of force and merit in the plays themselves, conducing to the design of raising these two passions : and suppose them ever to have been excellently acted, yet action only adds grace, vigour, and more life, upon the stage, but cannot give it wholly where it is not first. But secondly, I dare appeal to those who have never seen them acted, if they have not found these two passions moved within them ; and if the general voice will carry it, Mr. Rymer's prejudice will take off his single testimony.

This, being matter of fact, is reasonably to be established by this appeal ; as if one man says it is night, when the rest of the world conclude it to be day,* there needs no farther argument against him, that it is so.

If he urge, that the general taste is depraved, his arguments to prove this can at best but evince that our poets took not the best way to raise those passions ; but experience proves against him, that

comical part pleases. I say that Mr. Hart pleases ; most of the business falls to his share, and what he delivers every one takes upon content ; their eyes are prepossessed and charmed by his action, before aught of the poet's can approach their ears ; and to the most wretched of characters he gives a lustre and *brillant*, which dazzles the sight, that the deformities in the poetry cannot be perceived."

* The word *when*, which is omitted in the transcript used by Dr. Johnson, I have supplied from the first edition. So, in a preceding passage, p. 308, l. 1. the word *speaking* has been restored from the same copy.

those means which they have used have been successful, and have produced them.

And one reason of that success is, in my opinion, this, that Shakspeare and Fletcher have written to the genius of the age and nation in which they lived; for though nature, as he objects, is the same in all places, and reason too the same, yet the climate, the age, the disposition of the people, to whom a poet writes, may be so different, that what pleased the Greeks would not satisfy an English audience.

And if they proceeded upon a foundation of truer reason to please the Athenians, than Shakspeare and Fletcher to please the English, it only shews that the Athenians were a more judicious people; but the poet's business is certainly to please the audience.

Whether our English audience have been pleased hitherto with acorns, as he calls it, or with bread, is the next question; that is, whether the means which Shakspeare and Fletcher have used in their plays to raise those passions before named, be better applied to the ends by the Greek poets than by them. And perhaps we shall not grant him this wholly: let it be yielded that a writer is not to run down with the stream, or to please the people by their own usual methods, but rather to reform their judgments,—it still remains to prove that our theatre needs this total reformation.

The faults which he has found in their designs, are rather wittily aggravated in many places, than

reasonably urged ; and as much may be returned on the Greeks by one who were as witty as himself.

2. They destroy not, if they are granted, the foundation of the fabrick, only take away from the beauty of the symmetry : for example, the faults in the character of the King and No King are not as he makes them, such as render him detestable, but only imperfections which accompany human nature, and are for the most part excused by the violence of his love ; so that they destroy not our pity or concernment for him. This answer may be applied to most of his objections of that kind.

And Rollo committing many murders, when he is answerable but for one, is too severely arraigned by him, for it adds to our horror and detestation of the criminal ; and poetick justice is not neglected neither, for we stab him in our minds for every offence which he commits ; and the point which the poet is to gain on the audience is not so much in the death of an offender, as the raising an horror of his crimes.

That the criminal should neither be wholly guilty, nor wholly innocent, but so participating of both as to move both pity and terour, is certainly a good rule, but not perpetually to be observed ; for that were to make all tragedies too much alike ; which objection he foresaw, but has not fully answered.

To conclude, therefore ; if the plays of the ancients are more correctly plotted, ours are more beautifully written. And if we can raise passions as high on worse foundations, it shews our genius in tragedy is greater ; for, in all other parts of it, the English have manifestly excelled them.

PREFACE

TO

THE WILD GALLANT.*

It would be a great impudence in me to say much of a comedy which has had but indifferent success in the action. I made the town my judges, and the greater part condemned it; after which I do not think it my concernment to defend it with the ordinary zeal of a poet for his decried poem. Though Corneille is more resolute in his Preface before his *PERTHARITE*, which was condemned more universally than this; for he avows boldly, that, in spite of censure, his play was well and regularly written, which is more than I dare say for mine. Yet it was received at court, and was more than once the divertisement of his Majesty, by his own command; but I have

* This comedy, though not published till 1669, must have been acted in 1663, or before, being our author's first play, and consequently prior to *THE RIVAL LADIES*, which was printed in 1664.—From the Prologue to the original edition, which was omitted in the subsequent copies, it appears that *THE WILD GALLANT* was first represented on the 5th of February, probably February 5, 1662-3.—To this play no Dedication was prefixed.

more modesty than to ascribe that to my merit, which was his particular act of grace. It was the first attempt I made in Dramatick Poetry; and I find since, a very bold one, to begin with Comedy, which is the most difficult part of it. The plot was not originally my own; but so altered by me, (whether for the better or worse, I know not,) that whoever the author was, he could not have challenged a scene of it. I doubt not but you will see in it the uncorrectness of a young writer, which is yet but a small excuse for him who is so little amended since. The best apology I can make for it, and the truest, is only this; that you have since that time received with applause as bad and as uncorrect plays from other men.

DEDICATION
OF
THE INDIAN EMPEROR.

TO THE MOST EXCELLENT AND MOST ILLUSTRIOUS
PRINCESS,
A N N E,
DUCHESS OF MONMOUTH AND BUCCLEUGH,
WIFE TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND HIGH-BORN
PRINCE, JAMES, DUKE OF MONMOUTH.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

THE favour which Heroick Plays have lately found upon our theatres, has been wholly derived to them from the countenance and approbation they have received at court; the most eminent persons for wit and honour in the royal circle having so far owned them, that they have judged

¹ Anne, daughter of Walter Scot, earl of Buccleugh, who on the death of her father, and elder sister, became countess of Buccleugh. In 1665 she married James Fitzroy, duke of Monmouth, (natural son of King Charles the Second,) who afterwards, according to the usage of Scotland in such cases, bore the name of Scot. In about three years after his execution, she married (in May, 1688,) Charles, lord Cornwallis.

To this lady, who in her youth was celebrated for her beauty, and irreproachable conduct in a very trying situation,

no way so fit as verse to entertain a noble audience, or to express a noble passion; and amongst the rest which have been written in this kind, they have been so indulgent to this poem, as to allow it no inconsiderable place. Since, therefore, to the court I owe its fortune on the stage, so being now more publicly exposed in print, I humbly recommend it to your grace's protection, who by all knowing persons are esteemed a principal ornament of the court. But though the rank which you hold in the royal family might direct the eyes of a poet to you, yet your beauty and goodness detain and fix them. High objects, it is true, attract the sight; but it looks up with pain on craggy rocks and barren mountains, and continues not intent on any object which is wanting in shades and greens to entertain it. Beauty, in courts, is so necessary to the young, that those who are without it seem to be there to no other purpose than to wait on the triumphs of the fair; to attend their motions in obscurity, as the moon and stars do the sun by day; or, at best, to be the refuge of those hearts which others have despised; and, by the unworthiness of both, to give and take a miserable comfort. But as needful

and in a licentious court, and who at a subsequent period is characterized by Dr. Johnson, as "remarkable for inflexible perseverance in her demand to be treated as a princess," Gay, the poet, was for some time secretary, or rather domestick steward. She died in 1732, above eighty years old, leaving issue by both her husbands.

as beauty is, virtue and honour are yet more. The reign of it without their support is unsafe and short, like that of tyrants. Every sun which looks on beauty, wastes it ; and, when it once is decaying, the repairs of art are of as short continuance, as the afterspring, when the sun is going further off. This, madam, is its ordinary fate ; but your's, which is accompanied by virtue, is not subject to that common destiny. Your grace has not only a long time of youth in which to flourish, but you have likewise found the way, by an untainted preservation of your honour, to make that perishable good more lasting. And if beauty, like wines, could be preserved by being mixed and embodied with others of their own natures, then your grace's would be immortal ; since no part of Europe can afford a parallel to your noble lord in masculine beauty, and in goodness of shape. To receive the blessings and prayers of mankind, you need only to be seen together : we are ready to conclude that you are a pair of angels, sent below to make virtue amiable in your persons, or to sit to poets, when they would pleasantly instruct the age, by drawing goodness in the most perfect and alluring shape of nature. But though beauty be the theme on which poets love to dwell, I must be forced to quit it as a private praise, since you have deserved those which are more publick ; for goodness and humanity, which shine in you, are virtues which concern mankind ; and by a certain kind of interest, all

people agree in their commendation, because the profit of them may extend to many. It is so much your inclination to do good, that you stay not to be asked ; which is an approach so nigh to the Deity, that human nature is not capable of a nearer. It is my happiness that I can testify this virtue of your grace's by my own experience; since I have so great an aversion from soliciting court-favours, that I am ready to look on those as very bold, who dare grow rich there without desert. But I beg your grace's pardon for assuming this virtue of modesty to myself, which the sequel of this discourse will no way justify ; for in this address I have already quitted the character of a modest man, by presenting you this poem as an acknowledgment, which stands in need of your protection ; and which ought no more to be esteemed a present, than it is accounted bounty in the poor, when they bestow a child on some wealthy friend who will better breed it up. Offsprings of this nature are like to be so numerous with me, that I must be forced to send some of them abroad ; only this is like to be more fortunate than his brothers, because I have landed him on a hospitable shore. Under your patronage Montezuma hopes he is more safe, than in his native Indies, and therefore comes to throw himself at your grace's feet ; paying that homage to your beauty, which he refused to the violence of his conquerors. He begs only, that when he shall relate his sufferings, you will consider him as an

Indian prince, and not expect any other eloquence from his simplicity than what his griefs have furnished him withal. His story is, perhaps, the greatest which was ever represented in a poem of this nature, the action of it including the discovery and conquest of a new world. In it I have neither wholly followed the truth of the history, nor altogether left it; but have taken all the liberty of a poet to add, alter, or diminish, as I thought might best conduce to the beautifying of my work: it being not the business of a poet to represent historical truth, but probability. But I am not to make the justification of this poem, which I wholly leave to your grace's mercy. It is an irregular piece, if compared with many of Corneille's; and, if I may make a judgment of it, written with more flame than art; in which it represents the mind and intentions of the author, who is with much more zeal and integrity, than design and artifice,

MADAM,

Your Grace's most obedient,
and most obliged servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.¹

October 12, 1667.

¹ "Almost every piece," [of Dryden's,] says Dr. Johnson, "had a dedication, written with such elegance and luxuriance of praise, as neither haughtiness nor avarice could be imagined able to resist. But he seems to have made flattery too cheap. That praise is worth nothing of which the price is known. . . ."

"Of dramatick immorality he did not want examples among his predecessors, or companions among his contemporaries; but in the meanness and servility of hyperbolic adulation, I know not whether, since the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has been ever equalled, except by Afra Behn in an address to Eleanor Gwyn. When once he has undertaken the task of praise, he no longer retains shame in himself, nor supposes it in his patron. As many odoriferous bodies are observed to diffuse perfumes from year to year, without sensible diminution of bulk or weight, he appears never to have impoverished his mint of flattery by his expences, however lavish. He had all the forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endless variation; and when he had scattered on the hero of the day the golden shower of wit and virtue, he had ready for him, whom he wished to court on the morrow, new wit and virtue with another stamp. Of this kind of meanness he never seems to decline the practice, or lament the necessity: he considers the great as entitled to encomiastick homage, and brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention than mortified by the prostitution of his judgment. It is indeed not certain, that on these occasions his judgment much rebelled against his interest. There are minds which easily sink into submission, that look on grandeur with undistinguishing reverence, and discover no defect where there is elevation of rank and affluence of riches."

In a conversation which I had a few years ago with the late Mr. Burke, talking of Dryden's Dedications, he observed, that the extravagant panegyricks which they contain, were the vice of the time, not of the man; that the Dedications of almost every other writer of that period were equally loaded with flattery; and that no disgrace was annexed to such an exercise of men's talents,

the contest being who should go furthest in the most graceful way, and with the best turns of expression. He added, that Butler had well illustrated the principle on which they went, where he compares their endeavours to those of the archer, who *draws his arrow to the head*, whether his object be a swan or a goose.—The plays, poems, and other productions which were issued from the press from the time of the Restoration to the reign of Queen Anne, fully confirm this remark.

The lines of HUDIBRAS alluded to by Mr. Burke, are these (P. II. c. i.):

- " This has been done by some, who those
- " They ador'd in rhyme, would kick in prose ; - - -
- " That have the hard fate to write best
- " Of those still that deserve it least :
- " It matters not how false or forc'd,
- " So the best things be said o' the worst ;
- " It goes for nothing when 'tis said,
- " Only the arrow's drawn to th' head,
- " Whether it be a swan or goose
- " They level at : so shepherds use
- " To set the same mark on the hip
- " Both of their sound and rotten sheep."

Dr. Johnson, in the passage above quoted, has mentioned Afra Behn's Address to Nell Gwyn [prefixed to *THE FEIGN'D CURTIZANS*, 1679,] as the highest flight of hyperbolical adulation. Perhaps *the force of flattery could no further go*. That panegyrick, however, though not surpassed, has been equalled in an Address to the same lady, prefixed to a scarce little volume, entitled, "*JANUA DIVORUM*, or, the Lives and Histories of the Heathen Gods," &c. By Robert Whitcombe. 8vo. 1678.

On the exaggerated praises of Dedications written in what has been called the *celestial style*, Pope has an excellent paper in *THE GUARDIAN*, No. 4, March 16, 1713, at which time he was in his twenty-sixth year.

PREFACE

TO

SECRET LOVE,

OR, THE MAIDEN QUEEN.³

IT has been the ordinary practice of the French poets, to dedicate their works of this nature to their king, especially when they have had the least encouragement to it by his approbation of them on the stage. But I confess I want the confidence to follow their example, though perhaps I have as specious pretences to it for this piece as any they can boast of; it having been owned in so particular a manner by his majesty, that he has graced it with the title of his play,⁴ and thereby rescued it from the severity (that I may not say malice) of its enemies. But, though a character so high and undeserved has not raised in me the presumption to offer such a trifle to his more serious view, yet I will own the vanity to say, that after this glory which it has received from a

³ This play was acted at the King's Theatre, and first printed in quarto, in 1668. It has no Dedication.

⁴ See p. 202, n. 7.

sovereign prince, I could not send it to seek protection from any subject. Be this poem then sacred to him without the tedious form of a dedication, and without presuming to interrupt those hours which he is daily giving to the peace and settlement of his people.⁵

For what else concerns this play, I would tell the reader that it is regular, according to the strictest of dramatick laws, but that it is a commendation which many of our poets now despise, and a beauty which our common audiences do not easily discern. Neither, indeed, do I value myself upon it, because with all that symmetry of parts, it may want an air and spirit, which consists in the writing, to set it off. It is a question variously disputed, whether an author may be allowed as a competent judge of his own works. As to the fabrick and contrivance of them certainly he may, for that is properly the employment of the judgment, which, as a master-builder, may determine, and that without deception, whether the work be according to the exactness of the model; still granting him to have a perfect idea of that pattern by which he works, and that he keeps himself always constant to the discourse of his judgment, without admitting self-love, which is the false surveyor of his fancy, to intermeddle in it. These qualifications

⁵ The author probably alludes to the frequent councils held at this time, (1668,) relative to the settlement of Ireland, at which the king was generally present,

granted, (being such as all sound poets are pre-supposed to have within them,) I think all writers, of what kind soever, may infallibly judge of the frame and contexture of their works; but for the ornament of writing, (which is greater, more various and *bizarre* in poesy than in any other kind,) as it is properly the child of fancy, so it can receive no measure, or at least but a very imperfect one, of its own excellencies or failures, from the judgment. Self-love, which enters but rarely into the offices of the judgment, here predominates; and fancy, if I may so speak, judging of itself, can be no more certain or demonstrative of its own effects, than two crooked lines can be the adequate measure of each other.⁶

What I have said on this subject may perhaps give me some credit with my readers, in my opinion of this play, which I have ever valued above the rest of my follies of this kind; yet not thereby in the least dissenting from their judgment who have concluded the writing of this to be

⁶ "In the Preface," [to THE MAIDEN QUEEN,] says Dr. Johnson, "Dryden discusses a curious question,—whether a poet can judge well of his own productions; and determines very justly, that, of the play and disposition, and all that can be reduced to principles of science, the author may depend upon his own opinion; but that, in those parts where fancy predominates, self-love may easily deceive. He might have observed, that what is good only because it pleases, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to please."—Life of DRYDEN.

much inferior to my INDIAN EMPEROR. But the argument of that was much more noble, not having the allay of comedy to depress it; yet if this be more perfect, either in its kind, or in the general notion of a play, it is as much as I desire to have granted for the vindication of my opinion, and, what as nearly touches me, the sentence of a royal judge. Many have imagined the character of Philocles to be faulty; some for not discovering the Queen's love, others for his joining in her restraint; but though I am not of their number, who obstinately defend what they have once said, I may with modesty take up those answers which have been made for me by my friends; namely, that Philocles, who was but a gentleman of ordinary birth, had no reason to guess so soon at the queen's passion, she being a person so much above him, and by the suffrages of all her people already destined to Lysimantes: besides, that he was prepossessed (as the Queen somewhere hints it to him,) with another inclination, which rendered him less clear-sighted in it, since no man at the same time can distinctly view two different objects. And if this with any shew of reason may be defended, I leave my masters, the criticks, to determine, whether it be not much more conducing to the beauty of my plot, that Philocles should be long kept ignorant of the Queen's love, than that with one leap he should have entered into the knowledge of it, and thereby freed himself, to the disgust of the audience, from that pleasing

labyrinth of errors which was prepared for him. As for that other objection of his joining in the Queen's imprisonment, it is indisputably that which every man, if he examines himself, would have done on the like occasion. If they answer, that it takes from the height of his character to do it, I would enquire of my over-wise censors, who told them I intended him a perfect character? or indeed, what necessity was there he should be so, the variety of images being one great beauty of a play? It was as much as I designed, to shew one great and absolute pattern of honour in my poem, which I did in the person of the Queen; all the defects of the other parts being set to shew, the more to recommend that one character of virtue to the audience. But neither was the fault of Philocles so great, if the circumstances be considered, which, as moral philosophy assures us, make the essential differences of good and bad; he himself best explaining his own intentions in his last act, which was the restoration of his Queen; and even before that, in the honesty of his expressions when he was unavoidably led by the impulsions of his love to do it. That which with more reason was objected as an indecorum, is the management of the last scene of the play, where Celadon and Florimel are treating too lightly of their marriage in the presence of the Queen, who likewise seems to stand idle while the great action of the drama is still depending. This I cannot otherwise defend, than by telling

you—I so designed it on purpose to make my play go off more smartly; that scene being in the opinion of the best judges the most divertising of the whole comedy. But though the artifice succeeded, I am willing to acknowledge it as a fault, since it pleased his Majesty, the best judge, to think it so.

I have only to add, that the play is founded on a story in the CYRUS, which he calls the Queen of Corinth; in whose character, as it has been affirmed to me, he represents that of the famous Christina, Queen of Sweden.—This is what I thought convenient to write by way of Preface to THE MAIDEN QUEEN, in the reading of which, I fear you will not meet with that satisfaction which you have had in seeing it on the stage; the chief parts of it, both serious and comick, being performed to that height of excellence, that nothing but a command which I could not handsomely disobey, could have given me the courage to have made it publick.

PREFACE

TO

THE TEMPEST,

OR, THE ENCHANTED ISLAND.⁷

THE writing of Prefaces to Plays was probably invented by some very ambitious poet, who never thought he had done enough;—perhaps by some ape of the French eloquence, which uses to make a business of a letter of gallantry, an examen of a farce, and, in short, a great pomp and ostentation of words on every trifle. This is certainly the talent of that nation, and ought not to be invaded by any other. They do that out of gaiety, which would be an imposition^a upon us.

We may satisfy ourselves with surmounting them in the scene, and safely leave them those trappings of writing, and flourishes of the pen, with which they adorn the borders of their plays, and which are indeed no more than good land-

⁷ This play, which has no Dedication, was not printed till 1670, but was acted at the Duke's Theatre in Portugal-Row, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, in 1668, or 1669.

^a *Imposition* is here used in its academical sense;—a task prescribed.

scapes to a very indifferent picture. I must proceed no farther in this argument, lest I run myself beyond my excuse for writing this ; give me leave therefore to tell you, reader, that I do it not to set a value on any thing I have written in this play, but out of gratitude to the memory of Sir William D'Avenant, who did me the honour to join me with him in the alteration of it.

It was originally Shakspeare's ; a poet for whom he had particularly a high veneration, and whom he first taught me to admire. The play itself had formerly been acted with success in the Black-Fryers ; and our excellent Fletcher had so great a value for it, that he thought fit to make use of the same design, not much varied, a second time. Those who have seen his SEA-VOYAGE, may easily discern that it was a copy of Shakspeare's TEMPEST : the Storm, the Desert Island, and the woman who had never seen a man, are all sufficient testimonies of it. But Fletcher was not the only poet who made use of Shakspeare's plot ; Sir John Suckling, a professed admirer of our author, has followed his footsteps in his GOBLINS : his Reginella being an open imitation of Shakspeare's Miranda ; and his spirits, though counterfeit, yet are copied from Ariel. But Sir William D'Avenant, as he was a man of quick and piercing imagination, soon found that somewhat might be added to the design of Shakspeare, of which neither Fletcher nor Suckling had ever thought ; and therefore to put the last hand to

it, he designed the counterpart to Shakspeare's plot, namely, that of a man who had never seen a woman ; that by this means those two characters of innocence and love might the more illustrate and commend each other. This excellent contrivance he was pleased to communicate to me, and to desire my assistance in it. I confess, that from the very first moment it so pleased me, that I never writ any thing with more delight. I must likewise do him that justice to acknowledge, that my writing received daily his amendments; and that is the reason why it is not so faulty as the rest which I have done, without the help or correction of so judicious a friend. The comical parts of the sailors were also of his invention, and for the most part his writing, as you will easily discover by the style. In the time I writ with him, I had the opportunity to observe somewhat more nearly of him than I had formerly done; when I had only a bare acquaintance with him ; I found him then of so quick a fancy, that nothing was proposed to him, on which he could not suddenly produce a thought extremely pleasant and surprising ; and those first thoughts of his, contrary to the old Latin proverb, were not always the least happy ; and as his fancy was quick, so likewise were the products of it remote and new. He borrowed not of any other ; and his imaginations were such as could not easily enter into any other man. His corrections were sober and judicious ; and he corrected his own writings much

more severely than those of another man, bestowing twice the time and labour in polishing which he used in invention.

It had perhaps been easy enough for me to have arrogated more to myself than was my due, in the writing of this play, and to have passed by his name with silence in the publication of it with the same ingratitude which others have used to him, whose writings he hath not only corrected, as he hath done this, but has had a greater inspection over them, and sometimes added whole scenes together, which may as easily be distinguished from the rest as true gold from counterfeit by the weight. But besides the unworthiness of the action, which deterred me from it, (there being nothing so base as to rob the dead of his reputation,) I am satisfied I could never have received so much honour in being thought the author of any poem, how excellent soever, as I shall from the joining my imperfections with the merit and name of Shakspeare and Sir William D'Avenant.

JOHN DRYDEN.

December 1,
1669.

DEDICATION

OF

AN EVENING'S LOVE,

OR, THE MOCK ASTROLOGER.

TO HIS GRACE,

WILLIAM, DUKE OF NEWCASTLE,

ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY
COUNCIL, AND OF THE MOST HONOURABLE ORDER
OF THE GARTER, &c.

AMONGST those few persons of wit and honour
whose favourable opinion I have desired, your own
virtue, and my great obligations to your grace,
have justly given you the precedence; for what
could be more glorious to me, than to have
acquired some part of your esteem, who are
admired and honoured by all good men; who have

⁹ A very highly-finished character of this nobleman,
who was born in 1594, and died December 25, 1676,
may be found in Clarendon's History of the Rebellion,
vol. ii. p. 507. He was author of a celebrated book on
Horsemanship, and of four plays; and was successively
the patron of Ben Jonson, D'Avenant, Dryden, Flecknoe,
and Shadwell, all of whom, except D'Avenant, have testified

been, for so many years together, the pattern and standard of honour to the nation; and whose whole life has been so great an example of heroick virtue, that we might wonder how it happened into an age so corrupt as ours, if it had not likewise been a part of the former. As you came into the world with all the advantages of a noble birth¹ and education, so you have rendered both yet more conspicuous by your virtue. Fortune, indeed, has perpetually crowned your undertakings with success, but she has only waited on your valour, not conducted it. She has ministered to your glory like a slave, and has been led in triumph by it; or at most, while honour led you by the hand to greatness, fortune only followed to keep you from sliding back in the ascent. That which Plutarch accounted her favour to Cimon and Lucullus, was but her justice to your Grace; and never to have been overcome where you led in person, as it was more than Hannibal could boast,

their gratitude by ample encomiums. "He was," says Shadwell, "the greatest master of wit, the most exact observer of mankind, and the most accurate judge of humour I ever knew."

The Dedication before us was addressed to him in 1671.

¹ His father was Sir Charles Cavendish; his mother a daughter of Cuthbert, Lord Ogle. Their son was created by James the First, Viscount Mansfield and Baron Ogle, June 3, 1620; 7th March, 1627-8, he was created Earl, 27th October, 1643, Marquis, and 16th March, 1664-5, Duke, of Newcastle.

so it was all that Providence could do for that party which it had resolved to ruin. Thus, my Lord, the last smiles of Victory were on your arms;^a and every where else declaring for the rebels, she seemed to suspend herself, and to doubt, before she took her flight, whether she were able wholly to abandon that cause for which you fought.

But the greatest trials of your courage and constancy were yet to come; many had ventured their fortunes, and exposed their lives to the utmost dangers for their king and country, who ended their loyalty with the war; and submitting to the iniquity of the times, chose rather to redeem their former plenty by acknowledging an Usurper, than to suffer with an unprofitable fidelity, as those meaner spirits called it, for their lawful sovereign. But as I dare not accuse so many of our nobility, who were content to accept their patrimonies from the clemency of the conqueror, and to retain only a secret veneration for their Prince, amidst the open worship which they were forced to pay to the Usurper who had dethroned him, so I hope I may have leave to extol that virtue which acted more generously; and which was not satisfied with an inward devotion to monarchy, but produced itself to view, and asserted the cause by open martyrdom. Of these rare patterns of loyalty your Grace was chief; those examples you

^a In an engagement near York, in June, 1642.

could not find, you made.³ Some few Catoes there were with you, whose invincible resolution could not be conquered by that usurping Cæsar; your virtue opposed itself to his fortune, and overcame it, by not submitting to it. The last and most difficult enterprize he had to effect, when he had conquered three nations, was to subdue your spirits; and he died weary of that war, and unable to finish it.

In the mean time, you lived more happily in your exile, than the other on his throne. Your loyalty made you friends and servants amongst foreigners; and you lived plentifully without a fortune,—for you lived on your own desert and reputation. The glorious name of the valiant and faithful NEWCASTLE, was a patrimony which could never be exhausted.

Thus, my Lord, the morning of your life was clear and calm; and though it was afterwards overcast, yet, in that general storm, you were never without a shelter. And now you are happily arrived to the evening of a day as serene as the dawn of it was glorious; but such an evening, as, I hope, and almost prophecy, is far from night; it is the evening of a summer's sun, which keeps the daylight long within the skies. The health of your body is maintained by the vigour of your mind; neither does the one shrink from the

³ The Duchess of Newcastle, in the *Life of the Duke*, p. 100, says, that the losses which he sustained in the Civil Wars, amounted to £. 733,579.

fatigue of exercise, nor the other bend under the pains of study. Methinks I behold in you another Caius Marius, who, in the extremity of his age, exercised himself almost every morning in the Campus Martius, amongst the youthful nobility of Rome; and afterwards, in your retirements, when you do honour to Poetry, by employing part of your leisure in it, I regard you as another Silius Italicus, who, having passed over his Consulship with applause, dismissed himself from business, and from the gown, and employed his age amongst the shades, in the reading and imitation of Virgil.

In which, lest any thing should be wanting to your happiness, you have, by a rare effect of fortune, found in the person of your excellent lady, not only a lover, but a partner of your studies; a lady whom our age may justly equal with the Sappho of the Greeks, or the Sulpitia of the Romans; who, by being taken into your bosom, seems to be inspired with your genius, and by writing the history of your life in so masculine a style,⁴ has already placed you in the number of the heroes. She has anticipated that great portion of fame which envy often hinders a living virtue from possessing; which would, indeed, have been

⁴ The Life of William, Duke of Newcastle, by his Duchess, was published in folio, in 1667, and again in the following year. A third edition appeared in 4to. in 1675.

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³ The Duchess of Newcastle, in the *Life of the Duke*, p. 100, says, that the losses which he sustained in the Civil Wars, amounted to £. 733,579.

fatigue of exercise, nor the other bend under the pains of study. Methinks I behold in you another Caius Marius, who, in the extremity of his age, exercised himself almost every morning in the Campus Martius, amongst the youthful nobility of Rome; and afterwards, in your retirements, when you do honour to Poetry, by employing part of your leisure in it, I regard you as another Silius Italicus, who, having passed over his Consulship with applause, dismissed himself from business, and from the gown, and employed his age amongst the shades, in the reading and imitation of Virgil.

In which, lest any thing should be wanting to your happiness, you have, by a rare effect of fortune, found in the person of your excellent lady, not only a lover, but a partner of your studies; a lady whom our age may justly equal with the Sappho of the Greeks, or the Sulpitia of the Romans; who, by being taken into your bosom, seems to be inspired with your genius, and by writing the history of your life in so masculine a style,⁴ has already placed you in the number of the heroes. She has anticipated that great portion of fame which envy often hinders a living virtue from possessing; which would, indeed, have been

⁴ The Life of William, Duke of Newcastle, by his Duchess, was published in folio, in 1667, and again in the following year. A third edition appeared in 4to. in 1675.

given to your ashes, but with a latter payment ; and of which you could have no present use, except it were by a secret presage of that which was to come, when you were no longer in a possibility of knowing it. So that if that were a praise or satisfaction to the greatest of Emperors, which the most judicious of poets gives him—

Præsentī tibi maturos largimur honores, &c.

that the adoration which was not allowed to Hercules and Romulus till after death, was given to Augustus living, then certainly it cannot be denied but that your Grace has received a double satisfaction ; the one, to see yourself consecrated to immortality while you are yet alive, the other, to have your praises celebrated by so dear, so just, and so pious an historian.

It is the consideration of this that stops my pen ; though I am loth to leave so fair a subject, which gives me as much field as poetry could wish, and yet no more than truth can justify. But to attempt any thing of a panegyrick, were to enterprize on your lady's right ; and to seem to affect those praises which none but the Duchess of Newcastle can deserve, when she writes the actions of her Lord. I shall therefore leave that wider space, and contract myself to those narrow bounds which best become my fortune and employment.

I am obliged, my Lord, to return you not only my own acknowledgments, but to thank you in

the name of former poets. The manes of Jonson⁵ and D'Avenant seem to require it from me, that those favours which you placed on them, and which they wanted opportunity to own in publick, yet might not be lost to the knowledge of posterity, with a forgetfulness unbecoming of the Muses, who are the daughters of memory. And give me leave, my Lord, to avow so much of vanity, as to say, I am proud to be their remembrancer; for by relating how gracious you have been to them, and are to me, I in some measure join my name with theirs; and the continued descent of your favours to me is the best title which I can plead for my succession. I only wish that I had as great reason to be satisfied with myself, in the return of our common acknowledgments, as your Grace may justly take in the conferring them; for I cannot but be very sensible that the present of an ill comedy, which I here make you, is a very unsuitable way of giving thanks for them, who themselves have written so many better. This pretends to nothing more than to be a foil to those scenes, which are composed by the most noble poet of our age and nation;⁶ and to be set as a water-mark of the lowest ebb, to which the wit of my predecessor has sunk and run down in me.

⁵ In No. 4955 of the Harleian MSS. are some letters of Ben Jonson's, addressed to this Nobleman.

⁶ Here we have another proof of the bad taste of the period at which Dryden wrote. Had not this extravagant

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⁶ Here we have another proof of the bad taste of the period at which Dryden wrote. Had not this extravagant

But though all of them have surpassed me in the scene, there is one part of glory in which I will not yield to any of them ; I mean, my Lord, that honour and veneration which they had for you in their lives, and which I preserve after them more holily than the vestal fires were maintained from age to age ; but with a greater degree of heat, and of devotion, than theirs, as being with more respect and passion than they ever were,

Your GRACE'S

Most obliged,

most humble,

and most obedient servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.*

and unjust preference of Jonson to Shakspeare been agreeable to the general opinion of that age, our author could scarcely have hazarded this eulogium, which I have too good an opinion of his judgment and taste, to believe the expression of his genuine sentiments.

* I take this opportunity of correcting an error into which I have fallen, respecting the date of the play to which this Dedication was prefixed, which I supposed to have been first printed in 1671, (see pp. 183 and 384); but the first edition was, I find, in 1668. This Dedication, however, is here properly placed, (conformably to the author's own arrangement,) before that prefixed to TYRANNICK LOVE, which was first printed in 1670.

DEDICATION
OF
TYRANNICK LOVE,

OR, THE ROYAL MARTYR.⁷

TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE,
JAMES, DUKE OF MONMOUTH AND BUCCLEUGH,
ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY
COUNCIL, AND KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER
OF THE GARTER, &c.

SIR,

THE favourable reception which your excellent lady afforded to one of my former plays, has encouraged me to double my presumption, in addressing this to your Grace's patronage. So dangerous a thing it is to admit a poet into your family, that you can never afterwards be free from the chiming of ill verses, perpetually sounding in your ears, and more troublesome than the neighbourhood of steeples. I have been favourable to myself in this expression; a zealous fanatick would

⁷ TYRANNICK LOVE was first printed in 1670; the second edition, *reviewed by the author*, in 1672.

have gone farther, and have called me the serpent, who first presented the fruit of my poetry to the wife, and so gained the opportunity to seduce the husband. Yet I am ready to avow a crime so advantageous to me ; but the world, which will condemn my boldness, I am sure will justify and applaud my choice. All men will join with me in the adoration which I pay you ; they would wish only I had brought you a more noble sacrifice. Instead of an heroick play, you might justly expect an heroick poem, filled with the past glories of your ancestors, and the future certainties of your own. Heaven has already taken care to form you for an hero. You have all the advantages of mind and body, and an illustrious birth, conspiring to render you an extraordinary person. The Achilles and the Rinaldo are present in you, even above their originals ; you only want a Homer, or a Tasso, to make you equal to them. Youth,⁹ beauty, and courage, all which you possess in the height of their perfection, are the most desirable gifts of heaven ; and heaven is never prodigal of such treasures, but to some uncommon purpose : so goodly a fabrick was never framed by an Almighty Architect for a vulgar guest. He shewed the value which he set upon your mind, when he took care to have it so nobly and so beau-

⁹ James, Duke of Monmouth, son of Charles the Second, by Lucy Waters, otherwise Barlow, was born in the year 1649, and consequently was now in his twenty-first year.

tifully lodged. To a graceful fashion and deportment of body, you have joined a winning conversation, and an easy greatness, derived to you from the best, and best beloved of Princes; and with a great power of obliging, the world has observed in you a desire to oblige, even beyond your power. This, and all that I can say on so excellent and large a subject, is only history, in which fiction has no part; I can employ nothing of poetry in it, any more than I do in that humble protestation which I make, to continue ever

Your GRACE's most obedient

and most devoted servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

PREFACE
TO
TYRANNICK LOVE,
OR, THE ROYAL MARTYR.

I WAS moved to write this play by many reasons; amongst others, the commands of some persons of honour, for whom I have a most particular respect, were daily sounding in my ears, that it would be of good example to undertake a poem of this nature. Neither were my own inclinations wanting to second their desires. I considered that pleasure was not the only end of poesy; and that even the instructions of morality were not so wholly the business of a poet, as that the precepts and examples of piety were to be omitted. For to leave that employment altogether to the clergy, were to forget that religion was first taught in verse, which the laziness or dulness of succeeding priesthood turned afterwards into prose;* and it were also to grant, (which I never shall,) that representations of this kind may not as well be conducing to holiness as to good manners. Yet far be it from me to compare the use of dramattick poesy with that of Divinity; I only

* "Thus foolishly, (says Dr. Johnson, observing on this passage,) could Dryden write, rather than not shew his malice to the parsons."

maintain, against the enemies of the stage, that patterns of piety, decently represented, and equally removed from the extremes of superstition and prophaneness, may be of excellent use to second the precepts of our religion. By the harmony of words we elevate the mind to a sense of devotion, as our solemn musick, which is inarticulate poesy, does in churches; and by the lively images of piety, adorned by action, through the senses allure the soul; which, while it is charmed in a silent joy of what it sees and hears, is struck at the same time with a secret veneration of things celestial, and is wound up insensibly into the practice of that which it admires. Now if, instead of this, we sometimes see on our theatres the examples of vice rewarded, or at least unpunished, yet it ought not to be an argument against the art, any more than the extravagancies and impieties of the pulpit in the late times of rebellion can be against the office and dignity of the clergy.

But many times it happens that poets are wrongfully accused, as it is my own case in this very play, where I am charged by some ignorant or malicious persons with no less crimes than prophaneness and irreligion.

The part of Maximin, against which these holy criticks so much declaim, was designed by me to set off the character of St. Catharine; and those who have read the Roman history may easily remember, that Maximin was not only a bloody tyrant, *vastus corpore, animo ferus*, as Herodian

describes him, but also a persecutor of the church, against which he raised the Sixth Persecution so that whatsoever he speaks or acts in this tragedy, is no more than a record of his life and manners; a picture, as near as I could take it, from the original. If with much pains and some success, I have drawn a deformed piece, there is as much of art, and as near an imitation of nature, in a lazar, as in a Venus. Maximin was an heathen, and what he speaks against religion, is in contempt of that which he professed. He defies the gods of Rome, which is no more than St. Catharine might with decency have done. If it be urged, that a person of such principles, who scoffs at any religion, ought not to be presented on the stage, why then are the lives and sayings of so many wicked and profane persons recorded in the Holy Scriptures? I know it will be answered,—that a due use may be made of them; that they are remembered with a brand of infamy fixed upon them; and set as sea-marks for those who behold them to avoid. And what other use have I made of Maximin? have I proposed him as a pattern to be imitated, whom, even for his impiety to his false gods, I have so severely punished? Nay, as if I had foreseen this objection, I purposely removed the scene of the play, which ought to have been at Alexandria in Egypt, where St. Catharine suffered, and laid it under the walls of Aquileia in Italy, where Maximin was slain; that the punishment of his crime might immediately succeed its execution.

This, Reader, is what I owed to my just defence, and the due reverence of that religion which I profess; to which all men, who desire to be esteemed good or honest, are obliged. I have neither leisure nor occasion to write more largely on this subject, because I am already justified by the sentence of the best and most discerning Prince in the world, by the suffrage of all unbiassed judges, and above all, by the witness of my own conscience, which abhors the thought of such a crime; to which I ask leave to add my outward conversation, which shall never be justly taxed with the note of atheism or prophaneness.

In what else concerns the play, I shall be brief. For the faults of the writing and contrivance, I leave them to the mercy of the reader; for I am as little apt to defend my own errors, as to find those of other poets. Only I observe, that the great censors of wit and poetry either produce nothing of their own, or what is more ridiculous than any thing they reprehend. Much of ill nature, and a very little judgment, go far in finding the mistakes of writers.

I pretend not that any thing of mine can be correct; this poem especially, which was contrived and written in seven weeks, though afterwards hindered by many accidents from a speedy representation, which would have been its just excuse.

Yet the scenes are every where unbroken, and the unities of place and time more exactly kept

than perhaps is requisite in a tragedy; or at least than I have since preserved them in *THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA*.

I have not every where observed the equality of numbers in my verse; partly by reason of my haste, but more especially because I would not have my sense a slave to syllables.

It is easy to discover that I have been very bold in my alteration of the story, which of itself was too barren for a play; and that I have taken from the church two martyrs, in the persons of Porphyrius and the Empress, who suffered for the Christian faith, under the tyranny of Maximin.

I have seen a French play, called *THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. CATHARINE*; but those who have read it will soon clear me from stealing out of so dull an author. I have only borrowed a mistake from him, of one Maximin for another; for finding him in the French poet, called the son of a Thracian herdsman, and an Alane woman, I too easily believed him to have been the same Maximin mentioned in Herodian; till afterwards, consulting Eusebius and Metaphrastes, I found the Frenchman had betrayed me into an error, (when it was too late to alter it,) by mistaking that first Maximin for a second, the contemporary of Constantine the Great, and one of the usurpers of the Eastern empire.

But neither was the other name of my play more fortunate; for as some who had heard of a tragedy of *St. CATHARINE*, imagined I had taken

my plot from thence, so others, who had heard of another play, called *L'AMOUR TYRANNIQUE*, with the same ignorance accused me to have borrowed my design from it, because I have accidentally given my play the same title; not having to this day seen it, and knowing only by report that such a comedy is extant in French, under the name of Monsieur Scudery.

As for what I have said of astral or ærial spirits, it is no invention of mine, but taken from those who have written on that subject. Whether there are such beings or not, it concerns not me; it is sufficient for my purpose, that many have believed the affirmative;^s and that these heroick representations, which are of the same nature with the epick, are not limited, but with the extremest bounds of what is credible.

For the little criticks who pleased themselves with thinking they have found a flaw in that line of the Prologue,

“ And he who servilely creeps after sense,

“ Is safe,” &c.

as if I patronized my own nonsense, I may reasonably suppose they have never read Horace. *Serpit humi tutus*, &c. are his words: he who creeps after plain, dull, common sense, is safe from committing absurdities, but can never reach any height, or excellence of wit; and sure I could not mean that any excellence were to be found in

^s See pp. 216, and 233.

nonsense.* With the same ignorance, or malice, they would accuse me for using—*empty arms*, when I writ of a ghost or shadow, which has only the appearance of a body or limbs, and is empty or void of flesh and blood; and *vacuis amplexitur ulnis*, was an expression of Ovid's on the same subject. Some fool before them had charged me in THE INDIAN EMPEROR with nonsense, in these words :

“ And follow Fate, which does too fast pursue ;”
which was borrowed from Virgil in the eleventh of his *Æneids* :

Eludit gyro interior, sequiturque sequentem.

I quote not these to prove that I never writ nonsense, but only to shew that they are so unfortunate as not to have found it.

VALE.

* Our author alludes to the following spirited lines of the Prologue to TYRANNICK LOVE :

“ Poets, like lovers, should be bold and dare ;
“ They spoil their business with an over-care ;
“ And he who servilely creeps after sense,
“ Is safe, but ne'er will reach to excellence.
“ Hence 'tis, our poet in his conjuring
“ Allow'd his fancy the full force and swing ;
“ But when a tyrant for his theme he had,
“ He loos'd the reins, and bid his muse run mad :
“ And though he stumbles in a full career,
“ Yet rashness is a better fault than fear.

- " He saw his way ; but, in so swift a pace,
" To choose the ground might be to lose the race.
" They then, who of each trip the advantage take,
" Find but those faults, which they want wit to make."

In the fifth line the author alludes to his alteration of *THE TEMPEST*, which being placed before *THE MOCK ASTROLOGER*, in his own list of his plays arranged in the order in which they were written, was probably first represented, as I have already suggested, in the winter of 1668, or early in 1669. From a passage in the Preface, it appears not to have been produced till after the death of D'Avenant. He died April 7, 1668.

DEDICATION
OF THE FIRST PART OF
THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

TO HIS

ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE DUKE.⁷

SIR,

HEROICK Poesy has always been sacred to Princes and to Heroes. Thus Virgil inscribed his *Æneids* to Augustus Cæsar; and of latter ages, Tasso and Ariosto dedicated their poems to the house of Este. It is indeed but justice, that the most excellent and most profitable kind of writing, should be addressed by poets to such persons whose characters have, for the most part, been the guides and patterns of their imitation; and poets, while they imitate, instruct. The feigned hero inflames the true; and the dead virtue animates the living. Since, therefore, the world is governed by precept and example, and both these can only

⁷ James, Duke of York, afterwards King James II. This Dedication was addressed to the Duke in 1672, when *THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA* was first published.

have influence from those persons who are above us, that kind of poesy which excites to virtue the greatest men, is of greatest use to human kind.

It is from this consideration that I have presumed to dedicate to your Royal Highness these faint representations of your own worth and valour in heroick poetry; or to speak more properly, not to dedicate, but to restore to you those ideas which, in the more perfect part of my characters, I have taken from you. Heroes may lawfully be delighted with their own praises, both as they are farther incitements to their virtue, and as they are the highest returns which mankind can make them for it.

And certainly, if ever nation were obliged either by the conduct, the personal valour, or the good fortune of a leader, the English are acknowledging, in all of them, to your Royal Highness. Your whole life has been a continued series of heroick actions, which you began so early, that you were no sooner named in the world, but it was with praise and admiration. Even the first blossoms of your youth paid us all that could be expected from a ripening manhood. While you practised but the rudiments of war, you outwent all other captains; and have since found none to surpass but yourself alone. The opening of your glory was like that of light; you shone to us from afar, and disclosed your first beams on distant nations; yet so, that the lustre of them was spread abroad, and reflected brightly on your

native country. You were then an honour to it, when it was a reproach to itself; and when the fortunate Usurper sent his arms to Flanders,⁷ many of the adverse party were vanquished by your fame, ere they tried your valour. The report of it drew over to your ensigns whole troops and companies of converted rebels; and made them forsake successful wickedness, to follow an oppressed and exiled virtue. Your reputation waged war with the enemies of your royal family, even within their trenches; and the more obstinate or more guilty of them were forced to be spies over those whom they commanded, lest the name of YORK should disband that army in whose fate it was to defeat the Spaniards, and force Dunkirk to surrender.⁸ Yet those victorious forces of the rebels were not able to sustain your arms; where you charged in person you were a conqueror. It is true, they afterwards recovered courage, and wrested that victory from others which they had lost to you; and it was a greater action for them to rally than it was to overcome. Thus, by the presence of your Royal Highness, the English on both sides remained victorious; and that army which was broken by your valour, became a terror to those for whom they conquered. Then it was, that at the cost of other nations you informed and cultivated that valour which was to defend

⁷ In 1657.

⁸ June 17, 1658.

your native country, and to vindicate its honour from the insolence of our encroaching neighbours. When the Hollanders, not contented to withdraw themselves from the obedience which they owed their lawful sovereign, affronted those by whose charity they were first protected; and, being swelled up to a pre-eminence of trade, by a supine negligence on our side, and a sordid parsimony on their own, dared to dispute the sovereignty of the seas, the eyes of three nations were then cast on you; and by the joint suffrage of King and people, you were chosen to revenge their common injuries; to which though you had an undoubted title by your birth, you had yet a greater by your courage. Neither did the success deceive our hopes and expectations; the most glorious victory which was gained by our navy in that war, was in that first engagement;⁹ wherein, even by the confession of our enemies, who ever palliate their own losses, and diminish our advantages, your absolute triumph was acknowledged: you conquered at the Hague as entirely as at London; and the return of a shattered fleet, without an admiral, left not the most impudent among them the least pretence for a false bonfire, or a dissembled day of publick thanksgiving. All our achievements against them afterwards, though we sometimes conquered, and were never overcome, were but a copy of that victory; and they still

⁹ June 3, 1665. See p. 34.

fell short of their original : somewhat of fortune was ever wanting, to fill up the title of so absolute a defeat ; or perhaps the guardian angel of our nation was not enough concerned, when you were absent, and would not employ his utmost vigour for a less important stake than the life and honour of a Royal Admiral.

And if since that memorable day you have had leisure to enjoy in peace the fruits of so glorious a reputation, it was occasion only has been wanting to your courage ; for that can never be wanting to occasion. The same ardour still incites you to heroick actions ; and the same concernment for all the interests of your King and brother continue to give you restless nights, and a generous emulation for your own glory. You are still meditating on new labours for yourself, and new triumphs for the nation ; and when our former enemies again provoke us, you will again solicit fate to provide you another navy to overcome, and another admiral to be slain. You will then lead forth a nation eager to revenge their past injuries, and, like the Romans, inexorable to peace till they have fully vanquished. Let our enemies make their boast of a surprise,* as the Samnites did of a successful stratagem ; but the *Furcæ Caudinæ* will never be forgiven till they are revenged. I have

* The author probably alludes to the naval engagement with the Dutch, near Solebay, May 18th, 1672, in which Lord Sandwich was killed.

always observed in your Royal Highness an extreme concernment for the honour of your country; it is a passion common to you with a brother, the most excellent of Kings; and in your two persons are eminent the characters which Homer has given us of heroick virtue, the commanding part in Agamemnon, and the executive in Achilles. And I doubt not, from both your actions, but to have abundant matter to fill the annals of a glorious reign; and to perform the part of a just historian to my Royal Master, without intermixing with it any thing of the poet.

In the mean time, while your Royal Highness is preparing fresh employments for our pens, I have been examining my own forces, and making trial of myself how I shall be able to transmit you to posterity. I have formed a hero, I confess, not absolutely perfect, but of an excessive and over-boiling courage; but Homer and Tasso are my precedents. Both the Greek and the Italian poet had well considered, that a tame hero who never transgresses the bounds of moral virtue, would shine but dimly in an epick poem; the strictness of those rules might well give precepts to the reader, but would administer little of occasion to the writer; but a character of an eccentric virtue is the more exact image of human life, because he is not wholly exempted from its frailties: such a person is Almanzor, whom I present, with all humility, to the patronage of your Royal Highness. I designed in him a roughness of character, impa-

tient of injuries, and a confidence of himself almost approaching to an arrogance. But these errors are incident only to great spirits; they are moles and dimples, which hinder not a face from being beautiful, though that beauty be not regular; they are of the number of those amiable imperfections which we see in mistresses, and which we pass over without a strict examination, when they are accompanied with greater graces. And such in Almanzor are a frank and noble openness of nature; an easiness to forgive his conquered enemies, and to protect them in distress; and above all, an inviolable faith in his affection. This, Sir, I have briefly shadowed to your Royal Highness, that you may not be ashamed of that hero whose protection you undertake. Neither would I dedicate him to so illustrious a name, if I were conscious to myself that he did or said any thing which was wholly unworthy of it. However, since it is not just that your Royal Highness should defend or own what possibly may be my error, I bring before you this accused Almanzor in the nature of a suspected criminal. By the suffrage of the most and best he already is acquitted; and by the sentence of some, condemned; but as I have no reason to stand to the award of my enemies, so neither dare I trust the partiality of my friends. I make my last appeal to your Royal Highness, as to a sovereign tribunal. Heroes should only be judged by heroes, because they only are capable of measuring great and heroick actions by the rule

and standard of their own. If Almanzor has failed in any point of honour, I must therein acknowledge that he deviates from your Royal Highness, who are the pattern of it; but if at any time he fulfils the parts of personal valour and of conduct, of a soldier or a general; or if I could yet give him a character more advantageous than what he has,—of the most unshaken friend, the greatest of subjects, and the best of masters,—I should then draw to all the world a true resemblance of your worth and virtues; at least as far as they are capable of being copied by the mean abilities of,

SIR,

Your Royal Highness's

Most humble and

Most obedient servant,

J. DRYDEN.

DEDICATION
OF
MARRIAGE A-LA-MODE.^a

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE EARL OF ROCHESTER.^a

MY LORD,

I HUMBLY dedicate to your Lordship that poem, of which you were pleased to appear an early patron, before it was acted on the stage. I may yet go farther, with your permission, and say, that it received amendment from your noble hands, ere it was fit to be presented. You may please

^a This comedy was printed in the year 1673, when probably it first was represented on the stage. The Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane having been burnt down in January, 1671-2, the King's Company of Comedians, till it was re-built, were obliged to occupy another theatre; but to what theatre they removed, has not been ascertained by the stage-historians of that period. It appears, however, from a manuscript in the British Museum (MSS. Sloan. 4455, art. 6) that in this distress they took possession of the old theatre in Portugal-Row, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, which their competitors, the Duke's Company, had recently left, removing to a new play-house in Dorset-

likewise to remember with how much favour to the author, and indulgence to the play, you commended it to his Majesty, then at Windsor, and by his approbation of it in writing, made way for its kind reception on the theatre. In this Dedication, therefore, I may seem to imitate a custom of the ancients, who offered to their gods the firstlings of the flock, which I think they call *Ver Sacrum*, because they helped them to increase. I am sure if there be any thing in this play wherein

Gardens. In our author's *Miscellanies* we find a "Prologue spoken the first day of the King's House acting after the fire;" but the copy among the Sloanian MSS. ascertains not only the play represented on that occasion, but the theatre where it was acted: "A Prologue of a play, entitled WIT WITHOUT MONEY, spoken at the Duke's *old* Theatre, (after the King's was burnt,) by the King's Players, Feb. 26, 1671." [i. e. 1671-2.] At this theatre, therefore, MARRIAGE A-LA-MODE must have been represented; for the new house, built by the King's Company, was not opened till March 26, 1674, on which occasion also our author contributed a Prologue.

² John Wilmot, the celebrated Earl of Rochester, who at this time was in the twenty-sixth year of his age, and with whom our author was now on good terms. A few years afterwards, in consequence of the publication of the *ESSAY ON SATIRE*, which was attributed to Dryden, (and probably was the joint production of him and the Earl of Mulgrave,) Lord Rochester, who together with the Duchess of Portsmouth was severely treated in that poem, is supposed to have hired ruffians to beat our author, which they did in Rose-Alley, (Dec. 18, 1679,) as he was returning from a coffee-house to his lodgings.

I have raised myself beyond the ordinary lowness of my comedies, I ought wholly to acknowledge it to the favour of being admitted into your Lordship's conversation. And not only I, who pretend not to this way, but the best comick writers of our age, will join with me to acknowledge, that they have copied the gallantries of courts, the delicacy of expression, and the decencies of behaviour,³ from your Lordship, with more success than if they had taken their models from the court of France. But this, my Lord, will be no wonder to the world, which knows the excellency of your natural parts, and those you have acquired in a noble education. That which with more reason I admire is, that being so absolute a courtier, you have not forgot either the ties of friendship or the practice of generosity. In my little experience of a court, (which I confess I desire not to improve,) I have found in it much of interest, and more of detraction; few men there have that assurance of a friend, as not to be made ridiculous by him when they are absent. There are a middling sort of courtiers, who become happy by their want of wit; but they supply that want by an excess of malice to those who have it. And there is no such persecution as that of fools; they can never be considerable enough to

³ To commend this dissolute nobleman for the *decencies of behaviour*, may seem a very uncommon stretch of flattery; yet probably, in the ordinary intercourse of life he was perfectly well-bred and polite.

be talked of themselves, so that they are safe only in their obscurity, and grow mischievous to witty men by the great diligence of their envy, and by being always present to represent and aggravate their faults. In the mean time they are forced, when they endeavour to be pleasant, to live on the offals of their wit whom they decry; and either to quote it, which they do unwillingly, or to pass it upon others for their own. These are the men who make it their business to chace wit from the knowledge of princes, lest it should disgrace their ignorance; and this kind of malice your Lordship has not so much avoided as surmounted. But if by the excellent temper of a Royal Master, always more ready to hear good than ill; if by his inclination to love you, if by your own merit and address, if by the charms of your conversation, the grace of your behaviour, your knowledge of greatness and habitude in courts, you have been able to preserve yourself with honour in the midst of so dangerous a course; yet at least the remembrance of those hazards has inspired you with pity for other men, who being of an inferior wit and quality to you, are yet persecuted for being that in little which your Lordship is in great. For the quarrel of those people extends itself to any thing of sense; and if I may be so vain to own it amongst the rest of the poets, has sometimes reached to the very borders of it, even to me: so that if our general good fortune had not raised

up your Lordship to defend us, I know not whether any thing had been more ridiculous in court than writers. It is to your Lordship's favour we generally owe our protection and patronage; and to the nobleness of your nature, which will not suffer the least shadow of your wit to be contemned in other men. You have been often pleased not only to excuse my imperfections, but to vindicate what was tolerable in my writings from their censures; and, what I never can forget, you have not only been careful of my reputation, but of my fortune; you have been solicitous to supply my neglect of myself, and to overcome the fatal modesty of poets, which submits them to perpetual wants, rather than to become importunate with those people who have the liberality of Kings in their disposing; and who, dishonouring the bounty of their master, suffer such to be in necessity, who endeavour at least to please him; and for whose entertainment he has generously provided, if the fruits of his royal favour were not often stopped in other hands. But your Lordship has given me occasion not to complain of courts, whilst you are there. I have found the effects of your mediation in all my concernments; and they were so much the more noble in you, because they were wholly voluntary. I became your Lordship's, if I may venture on the similitude, as the world was made, without knowing him who made it; and brought only a passive obedience to be your creature.

This nobleness of your's I think myself the rather obliged to own, because otherwise it must have been lost to all remembrance ; for you are endued with that excellent quality of a frank nature, to forget the good which you have done.

But, my Lord, I ought to have considered, that you are as great a judge as you are a patron ; and that in praising you ill, I shall incur a higher note of ingratitude than that I thought to have avoided. I stand in need of all your accustomed goodness for the Dedication of this play ; which, though perhaps it be the best of my comedies, is yet so faulty, that I should have feared you for my critick, if I had not with some policy given you the trouble of being my protector. Wit seems to have lodged itself more nobly in this age, than in any of the former ; and people of my mean condition are only writers, because some of the nobility, and your Lordship in the first place, are above the narrow praises which poesy could give you. But let those who love to see themselves exceeded, encourage your Lordship in so dangerous a quality ; for my own part, I must confess that I have so much of self-interest, as to be content with reading some papers of your verses, without desiring you should proceed to a scene or play ; with the common prudence of those who are worsted in a duel, and declare they are satisfied when they are first wounded. Your Lordship has but another step to make, and from the patron of wit you may

become its tyrant, and oppress our little reputations with more ease than you now protect them. But these, my Lord, are designs which I am sure you harbour not, any more than the French King is contriving the conquest of the Swissers. It is a barren triumph, which is not worth your pains, and would only rank him amongst your slaves, who is already,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient,

and most faithful servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

DEDICATION
OF
THE ASSIGNATION,
OR, LOVE IN A NUNNERY.⁴

TO MY MOST HONOURED FRIEND,
SIR CHARLES SEDLEY, BARONET.⁵

SIR,

THE design of dedicating plays is as common and unjust, as that of desiring seconds in a duel. It is engaging our friends (it may be) in a senseless quarrel, where they have much to venture, without any concernment of their own. I have declared thus much beforehand, to prevent you from suspicion that I intend to interest either your judgment or your kindness in defending the errors

⁴ The ASSIGNATION was acted at the Theatre Royal, and first printed in 1673.

⁵ Sir Charles Sedley, whose poetry and plays were formerly much admired, but are now little read, was born about the year 1639, and bred at Wadham College, Oxford, where probably his intimacy with Lord Rochester commenced. In 1678, and several subsequent parliaments, he was Member for New-Romney in Kent, which he represented in the year 1700, when he died. Jacob, and other biographers, have erroneously asserted that he lived to ninety years of age.

of this comedy. It succeeded ill in the representation, against the opinion of many the best judges of our age, to whom you know I read it ere it was presented publickly. Whether the fault was in the play itself, or in the lameness of the action, or in the number of its enemies, who came resolved to damn it for the title, I will not now dispute; that would be too like the little satisfaction which an unlucky gamester finds in the relation of every cast by which he came to lose his money. I have had formerly so much success, that the miscarriage of this play was only my giving Fortune her revenge; I owed it her; and she was indulgent, that she exacted not the payment long before. I will therefore deal more reasonably with you, than any poet has ever done with any patron; I do not so much as oblige you, for my sake, to pass two ill hours in reading of my play. Think, if you please, that this Dedication is only an occasion I have taken to do myself the greatest honour imaginable with posterity; that is, to be recorded in the number of those men whom you have favoured with your friendship and esteem; for I am well assured, that besides the present satisfaction I have, it will gain me the greatest part of my reputation with afterages, when they shall find me valuing myself on your kindness to me. I may have reason to suspect my own credit with them, but I have none to doubt of your's; and they who perhaps would forget me in my poems, would remember me in this epistle.

This was the course which has formerly been

practised by the poets of that nation who were masters of the universe. Horace and Ovid, who had little reason to distrust their immortality, yet took occasion to speak with honour of Virgil, Varius, Tibullus, and Propertius, their contemporaries ; as if they sought, in the testimony of their friendship, a farther evidence of their fame. For my own part, I who am the least amongst the poets, have yet the fortune to be honoured with the best patron, and the best friend ; for, (to omit some great persons of our court, to whom I am many ways obliged, and who have taken care of me, even amidst the exigencies of a war,)⁶ I can make my boast to have found a better Mæcenas in the person of my Lord Treasurer Clifford, and a more elegant Tibullus in that of Sir Charles Sedley. I have chosen that poet to whom I would resemble you, not only because I think him at least equal, if not superior to Ovid in his elegies ; nor because of his quality, for he was, you know, a Roman knight, as well as Ovid ; but for his candour, his wealth, his way of living, and particularly because of this testimony which is given him by Horace, which I have a thousand times in my mind applied to you :

*Non tu corpus eras sine pectore : Dii tibi formam,
Dii tibi divitias dederant, artemq; fruendi.
Quid voveat dulci nutricula majus alumno
Quam sapere, et fari possit quæ sentiat, et cui
Gratia, forma, valetudo contingat abunde ;
Et mundus victus, non deficiente crumena ?*

⁶ The second Dutch war.

Certainly the poets of that age enjoyed much happiness in the conversation and friendship of one another. They imitated the best way of living, which was to pursue innocent and inoffensive pleasure; that which one of the ancients called—*eruditam voluptatem*. We have, like them, our genial nights, where our discourse is neither too serious nor too light, but always pleasant, and for the most part instructive; the raillery neither too sharp upon the present, nor too censorious on the absent, and the cups only such as will raise the conversation of the night, without disturbing the business of the morrow. And thus far not only the philosophers, but the fathers of the church have gone, without lessening their reputation of good manners or of piety. For this reason I have often laughed at the ignorant and ridiculous descriptions which some pedants have given of the Wits, as they are pleased to call them; which are a generation of men as unknown to them as the people of Tartary or the *Terra Australis* are to us. And therefore, as we draw giants and Anthropophagi in those vacancies of our maps, where we have not travelled to discover better, so those wretches paint lewdness, atheism, folly, ill-reasoning, and all manner of extravagancies amongst us, for want of understanding what we are. Oftentimes it so falls out, that they have a particular picque to some one amongst us, and then they immediately interest heaven in their quarrel; as it is an usual trick in courts, when one designs the ruin of his enemy, to disguise his malice with

some concernment of the King's, and to revenge his own cause with pretence of vindicating the honour of his master. Such Wits as they describe I have never been so unfortunate to meet in your company; but have often heard much better reasoning at your table, than I have encountered in their books. The Wits they describe are the fops we banish; for blasphemy and atheism, if they were neither sin nor ill manners, are subjects so very common, and worn so threadbare, that people who have sense avoid them, for fear of being suspected to have none. It calls the good name of their wit in question, as it does the credit of a citizen, when his shop is filled with trumperies and painted titles, instead of wares; we conclude them bankrupt to all manner of understanding, and that to use blasphemy is a kind of applying pigeons to the soles of the feet; it proclaims their fancy as well as judgment to be in a desperate condition. I am sure, for your own particular, if any of these judges had once the happiness to converse with you,—to hear the candour of your opinions,—how freely you commend that wit in others, of which you have so large a portion yourself,—how unapt you are to be censorious,—with how much easiness you speak so many things, and those so pointed, that no other man is able to excel, or perhaps to reach by study,—they would, instead of your accusers, become your proselytes. They would reverence so much good sense and so much good nature in the same person; and

come, like the satyr, to warm themselves at that fire, of which they were ignorantly afraid, when they stood at distance. But you have too great a reputation to be wholly free from censure : it is a fine which Fortune sets upon all extraordinary persons, and from which you should not wish to be delivered till you are dead. I have been used by my criticks much more severely, and have more reason to complain, because I am deeper taxed for less estate. I am ridiculously enough accused to be a contemner of Universities, that is, in other words, an enemy of learning, without the foundation of which I am sure no man can pretend to be a poet ; and if this be not enough, I am made a detractor from my predecessors,⁷ whom I confess to have been my masters in the art ; but this latter was the accusation of the best judge, and almost the best poet in the Latin tongue. You find Horace complaining, that for taxing some verses in Lucilius, he himself was blamed by others, though his design was no other than mine now,—to improve the knowledge of poetry ; and it was no defence to him, amongst his enemies, any more than it is for me, that he praised Lucilius where he deserved it ; *pagina laudatur eadem*. It is for this reason I will be no more mistaken for my good meaning : I know I honour Ben Jonson more than my little criticks, because without vanity

⁷ In the Epilogue to the Second Part of THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

I may own, I understand him better. As for the errors they pretend to find in me, I could easily shew them that the greatest part of them are beauties; and for the rest, I could recriminate upon the best poets of our nation, if I could resolve to accuse another of little faults, whom at the same time I admire for greater excellencies. But I have neither concernment enough upon me to write any thing in my own defence, neither will I gratify the ambition of two wretched scribblers,⁸ who desire nothing more than to be answered. I have not wanted friends, even amongst strangers, who have defended me more strongly than my contemptible pedant could attack me; for the other, he is only like Fungoso in the play, who follows the fashion at a distance, and adores the Fastidious Brisk of Oxford. You can bear

⁸ In the year 1673, three satirical pamphlets appeared against our author, under the following titles:—

1. "THE CENSURE OF THE ROTA on Mr. Dryden's CONQUEST OF GRANADA." Printed at Oxford. 2. "A Description of the Academy of the Athenian Virtuosi; with a Discourse held there in Vindication of Mr. Dryden's CONQUEST OF GRANADA, against the author of THE CENSURE OF THE ROTA." 3. "A Friendly Vindication of Mr. Dryden from the Author of THE CENSURE OF THE ROTA." Printed at Cambridge. This pamphlet (and probably the other two also) was published after the representation, but before the publication, of LOVE IN A NUNNERY.—Dryden probably here alludes to the supposed authors of these pieces. The *contemptible pedant*, I suspect, was Martin Clifford, Master of the Charter-

me witness, that I have not consideration enough for either of them to be angry : let Mævius and Bavius admire each other ; I wish to be hated by them and their fellows, by the same reason for which I desire to be loved by you. And I leave it to the world, whether their judgment of my poetry ought to be preferred to your's ; though they are as much prejudiced by their malice as I desire you should be led by your kindness, to be partial to,

SIR,

Your most humble

And most faithful servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

House, who was perhaps author of one of these pamphlets, and who had assisted the Duke of Buckingham in writing *THE REHEARSAL*. The author of *THE CENSURE OF THE ROTA* was, according to Wood, Richard Leigh, who had been bred at Queen's College, Oxford, and was at this time a player in the Duke of York's Company ; but whether he was one of the *wretched scribblers* here alluded to, I am unable to ascertain ; nor do I know who was meant by the *Fastidius Brisk* of Oxford.—Leigh's character seems to have nothing in common with *Fungoso* in *EVERY MAN OUT OF HIS HUMOUR*, except his being bred a student.

DEDICATION
OF
AMBOYNA.⁹

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE LORD CLIFFORD OF CHUDLEIGH.¹⁰

MY LORD,

AFTER so many favours, and those so great, conferred on me by your Lordship these many years, which I may call more properly one continued act of your generosity and goodness, I know not whether I should appear more ungrateful in my silence, or more extravagantly vain in my endeavours to acknowledge them; for since all acknowledgments bear a face of payment, it may be thought that I have flattered myself into an opinion of being able to return some part of my obligations to you; the just despair of which

⁹ This tragedy, which was acted at the Theatre Royal, was first printed in 1673, and must have been published between the 19th of June in that year, when Lord Clifford resigned the office of Lord High Treasurer, and the following September, when he died.

¹ Thomas Lord Clifford, who together with Ashley, Buckingham, Arlington, and Lauderdale, formed the well-known junto denominated the CABAL, was a Roman Catholick, and about one year elder than our author,

attempt, and the due veneration I have for his person to whom I must address, have almost driven me to receive only with a profound submission the effects of that virtue which is never to be comprehended but by admiration; and the greatest note of admiration is silence. It is that noble passion to which poets raise their audience in highest subjects, and they have then gained over them the greatest victory, when they are ravished into a pleasure which is not to be expressed by words. To this pitch, my Lord, the sense of my gratitude had almost raised me;—to receive your favours, as the Jews of old received their law, with a mute wonder,—to think, that the loudness of acclamation was only the praise of men to men, and that the secret homage of the soul was a greater mark of reverence than an outward ceremonious joy, which might be counterfeit, and must be irreverent in its tumult. Neither, my Lord, have I a particular right to pay you my acknowledgments; you have been a good so universal, that almost every man in three nations may think me injurious to his propriety, that I invade your praises in undertaking to celebrate them alone; and that have assumed to myself a patron, who was no more to

having been born August 1, 1630. On the 20th of April, 1672, he was created a peer, and on the 28th of November following, was appointed Lord Treasurer of England; which office he held only seven months. His character is given by Hume, in his History, vol. vii. p. 470, and more fully by Macpherson, vol. i. p. 123.

be circumscribed than the sun and elements, which are of publick benefit to human kind.

As it was much in your power to oblige all who could pretend to merit from the publick, so it was more in your nature and inclination. If any went ill-satisfied from the Treasury, while it was in your Lordship's management, it proclaimed the want of desert, and not of friends. You distributed your Master's favour with so equal hands, that Justice herself could not have held the scales more even; but with that natural propensity to do good, that had that treasure been your own, your inclination to bounty must have ruined you: no man attended to be denied; no man bribed for expedition; want and desert were pleas sufficient. By your own integrity, and your prudent choice of those whom you employed, the King gave all that he intended, and gratuities to his officers made not vain his bounty. This, my Lord, were you in your publick capacity of High Treasurer, to which you ascended by such degrees,^a that your Royal Master saw your virtues still growing to his favours faster than they could rise to you. Both at home and abroad, with your sword * and with your counsel, you have served

^a Lord Clifford, previous to his promotion to the office of Lord High Treasurer, had been Comptroller and Treasurer of the Houshold, and one of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury.

* In various sea-engagements with the Dutch, in 1665 and 1666.

him with unbiassed honour, and with unshaken resolution; making his greatness, and the true interest of your country, the standard and measure of your actions. Fortune may desert the wise and brave, but true virtue never will forsake itself. It is the interest of the world that virtuous men should attain to greatness, because it gives them the power of doing good; but when, by the iniquity of the times, they are brought to that extremity that they must either quit their virtue or their fortune, they owe themselves so much as to retire to the private exercise of their honour; to be great within, and by the constancy of their resolutions to teach the inferiour world how they ought to judge of such principles, which are asserted with so generous and so unconstrained a trial.

But this voluntary neglect of honours has been of rare example in the world. Few men have frowned first upon Fortune, and precipitated themselves from the top of her wheel, before they felt at least the declination of it. We read not of many emperors like Diocletian and Charles the Fifth, who have preferred a garden and a cloister before a crowd of followers, and the troublesome glory of an active life, (which robs the possessor of his rest and quiet,) to secure the safety and happiness of others. Seneca, with the help of his philosophy, could never attain to that pitch of virtue: he only endeavoured to prevent his fall, by descending first; and offered to resign that wealth which he knew he could no longer hold.

He would only have made a present to his master of what he foresaw would become his prey. He strove to avoid the jealousy of a tyrant ; you dismissed yourself from the attendance and privacy of a gracious King. Our age has afforded us many examples of a contrary nature ; but your Lordship is the only one of this. It is easy to discover in all governments those who wait so close on Fortune, that they are never to be shaken off at any turn ; such who seem to have taken up a resolution of being great,—to continue their stations on the theatre of business,—to change with the scene, and shift the vizard for another part. These men condemn, in their discourses, that virtue which they dare not practise ; but the sober part of this present age, and impartial posterity, will do right both to your Lordship and to them ; and when they read on what accounts, and with how much magnanimity you quitted those honours, to which the highest ambition of an English subject could aspire, will apply to you with much more reason, what the historian said of a Roman Emperor,—*Multi diutius imperium tenuerunt ; nemo fortius reliquit.*

To this retirement of your Lordship, I wish I could bring a better entertainment than this play ; which, though it succeeded on the stage, will scarcely bear a serious perusal, it being contrived and written in a month ; * the subject barren, the

* It was a temporary production, written in the time of the second Dutch war, to inflame the nation against their

him with unbiassed honour, and with unshaken resolution; making his greatness, and the true interest of your country, the standard and measure of your actions. Fortune may desert the wise and brave, but true virtue never will forsake itself. It is the interest of the world that virtuous men should attain to greatness, because it gives them the power of doing good; but when, by the iniquity of the times, they are brought to that extremity that they must either quit their virtue or their fortune, they owe themselves so much as to retire to the private exercise of their honour; to be great within, and by the constancy of their resolutions to teach the inferiour world how they ought to judge of such principles, which are asserted with so generous and so unconstrained a trial.

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persons low, and the writing not heightened with many laboured scenes. The consideration of these defects ought to have prescribed more modesty to the authour, than to have presented it to that person in the world for whom he has the greatest honour, and of whose patronage the best of his endeavours had been unworthy ; but I had not satisfied myself in staying longer, and could never have paid the debt with a much better play. As it is, the meanness of it will shew, at least, that I pretend not by it to make any manner of return for your favours ; and that I only give you a new occasion of exercising your goodness to me, in pardoning the failings and imperfections of,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most humble,

Most obliged, and

most obedient servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

enemies, by calling to their memories the inhuman cruelties practised by the Dutch on the English factory at Amboyna, in 1624,—This passage escaped Dr. Johnson, for he has said erroneously that “ the author thought not fit either ostentatiously or mournfully to tell how little labour it cost him, or at how short a warning he produced it.”—But such trifling mistakes are but specks in the finest body of Criticism extant in any language.

DEDICATION
OF
THE STATE OF INNOCENCE,
AND FALL OF MAN.

TO HER
ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE DUCHESS.³
MADAM,

AMBITION is so far from being a vice in poets, that it is almost impossible for them to succeed without it. Imagination must be raised by a desire of fame, to a desire of pleasing; and they whom in all ages poets have endeavoured most to please, have been the beautiful and the great. Beauty is their deity to which they sacri-

³ Anne, the first Duchess of York, daughter of Lord Clarendon, died at St. James's, March 31, 1671. On the 21st of November, 1673, the Duke married Mary of Este, (daughter of the Duke of Modena,) to whom this epistle dedicatory is addressed. She was at the time of her marriage little more than fourteen, and, according to Macpherson, of exquisite beauty. "Her complexion was very fair, her hair black, her eyes full of sweetness and fire. She was tall in her person, and admirably

fice, and greatness is their guardian angel which protects them. Both these are so eminently joined in the person of your Royal Highness, that it were not easy for any but a poet to determine which of them outshines the other. But I confess, Madam, I am already biassed in my choice. I can easily resign to others the praise of your illustrious family, and that glory which you derive from a long-continued race of Princes, famous for their actions both in peace and war; I can give

shaped; dignified in her manner, and graceful in her deportment. During the twelve years she was Duchess of York, she seemed to have given herself up wholly to innocent cheerfulness and amusements. The prejudices of the people were greatly removed by her behaviour; the uneasiness conceived on account of her religion was soon forgotten; and she was universally esteemed, and by many beloved. Her beauty rendered her the favourite of the populace, when the bigotry of her husband was most feared," HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN, vol. i. p. 178.

Of all our author's dedications, the present, while it furnishes abundant proofs of the variety and luxuriance of his fancy, exhibits the most perfect specimen of the CELESTIAL style. See p. 323.

"This composition," says Dr. Johnson, "is addressed to the Princess of Modena, then Duchess of York, in a strain of flattery which disgraces genius, and which it is wonderful that any man that knew the meaning of his own words could use without self-detestation. It is an attempt to mingle earth and heaven, by praising human excellence in the language of religion."—Life of DRYDEN.

up to the historians of your country the names of so many generals and heroes which croud their annals ; and to our own, the hopes of those which you are to produce for the British chronicle. I can yield, without envy, to the nation of poets, the family of Este, to which Ariosto and Tasso have owed their patronage, and to which the world has owed their poems ; but I could not, without extreme reluctance, resign the theme of your beauty to another hand. Give me leave, Madam, to acquaint the world, that I am jealous of this subject ; and let it be no dishonour to you, that after having raised the admiration of mankind, you have inspired one man to give it voice. But with whatsoever vanity this new honour of being your poet has filled my mind, I confess myself too weak for the inspiration ; the priest was always unequal to the oracle ; the god within him was too mighty for his breast. He laboured with the sacred revelation, and there was more of the mystery left behind, than divinity itself could enable him to express. I can but discover a part of your excellencies to the world ; and that too according to the measure of my own weakness. Like those who have surveyed the moon by glasses, I can only tell of a new and shining world above us, but not relate the riches and glories of the place ; it is therefore that I have already waved the subject of your greatness, to resign myself to the contemplation of what is more peculiarly your's. Greatness is indeed communicated to some few of both

sexes ; but beauty is confined to a more narrow compass : it is only in your sex ; it is not shared by many, and its supreme perfection is in you alone. And here, Madam, I am proud that I cannot flatter. You have reconciled the differing judgments of mankind ; for all men are equal in their judgment of what is eminently best. The prize of beauty was disputed only till you were seen ; but now all pretenders have withdrawn their claims ; there is no competition but for the second place ; even the fairest of our island, which is famed for beauties, not daring to commit their cause against you to the suffrage of those who most partially adore them. Fortune has, indeed, but rendered justice to so much excellence, in setting it so high to publick view ; or rather Providence has done justice to itself, in placing the most perfect workmanship of heaven where it may be admired by all beholders. Had the sun and stars been seated lower, their glory had not been communicated to all at once ; and the Creator had wanted so much of his praise, as he had made your condition more obscure ; but he has placed you so near a crown, that you add a lustre to it by your beauty. You are joined to a Prince who only could deserve you ; whose conduct, courage, and success in war, whose fidelity to his royal brother, whose love for his country, whose constancy to his friends, whose bounty to his servants, whose justice to merit, whose inviolable truth, and whose magnanimity in all his actions,

seem to have been rewarded by heaven by the gift of you. You are never seen but you are blest ; and I am sure you bless all those who see you. We think not the day is long enough when we behold you ; and you are so much the business of our souls, that while you are in sight, we can neither look nor think on any else. There are no eyes for other beauties ; you only are present, and the rest of your sex are but the unregarded parts that fill your triumph. Our sight is so intent on the object of its admiration, that our tongues have not leisure even to praise you ; for language seems too low a thing to express your excellence, and our souls are speaking so much within, that they despise all foreign conversation. Every man, even the dullest, is thinking more than the most eloquent can teach him how to utter. Thus, Madam, in the midst of crowds, you reign in solitude ; and are adored with the deepest veneration, that of silence. It is true, you are above all mortal wishes ; no man desires impossibilities, because they are beyond the reach of nature. To hope to be a god, is folly exalted into madness ; but by the laws of our creation, we are obliged to adore him, and are permitted to love him at human distance. It is the nature of perfection to be attractive, but the excellency of the object refines the nature of the love. It strikes an impression of awful reverence ; it is indeed that love which is more properly a zeal than passion. It is the rapture which anchorites find in prayer

when a beam of the Divinity shines upon them; that which makes them despise all worldly objects; and yet it is all but contemplation. They are seldom visited from above; but a single vision so transports them, that it makes up the happiness of their lives. Mortality cannot bear it often: it finds them in the eagerness and height of their devotion; they are speechless for the time that it continues, and prostrate and dead when it departs. That ecstasy had needs be strong, which, without any end but that of admiration, has power enough to destroy all other passions. You render mankind insensible to other beauties, and have destroyed the empire of love in a court which was the seat of his dominion. You have subverted (may I dare to accuse you of it?) even our fundamental laws, and reign absolute over the hearts of a stubborn and free-born people, tenacious almost to madness of their liberty. The brightest and most victorious of our ladies make daily complaints of revolted subjects, if they may be said to be revolted, whose servitude is not accepted; for your Royal Highness is too great and too just a monarch either to want or to receive the homage of rebellious fugitives. Yet, if some few among the multitude continue steadfast to the first pretensions, it is an obedience so lukewarm and languishing, that it merits not the name of passion. Their addresses are so faint, and their vows so hollow to their sovereigns, that they seem only to maintain their faith out of a sense of honour; they are

ashamed to desist, and yet grow careless to obtain; like despairing combatants, they strive against you, as if they had beheld unveiled the magical shield of your Ariosto, which dazzled the beholders with too much brightness; they can no longer hold up their arms; they have read their destiny in your eyes:

Splende lo scudo, a guisa di pirolo,

E luce altra non è tanto lucente:

Cader in terra a lo splendor fu d' olo,

Con gli occhi abbacinati, e senza mente.

And yet, Madam, if I could find in myself the power to leave this argument of your incomparable beauty, I might turn to one which would equally oppress me with its greatness; for your conjugal virtues have deserved to be set as an example to a less-degenerate, less-tainted age.⁴ They approach so near to singularity in ours, that I can scarcely make a panegyrick to your Royal Highness without a satire on many others; but your person is a paradise, and your soul a cherubin within to guard it. If the excellency of the outside invite the beholders, the majesty of your mind deters them from too bold approaches, and turns their admiration into religion. Moral per-

⁴ Who would imagine that the conjugal virtues here praised had only been displayed for twelve months, and that this wife of approved constancy was scarce fifteen years old! Such, however, was the fact.

fections are raised higher by you in the softer sex; as if men were of too coarse a mould for heaven to work on, and that the image of Divinity could not be cast to likeness in so harsh a metal. Your person is so admirable, that it can scarce receive addition when it shall be glorified; and your soul, which shines through it finds it of a substance so near her own, that she will be pleased to pass an age within it, and to be confined to such a palace.

I know not how I am hurried back to my former theme. I ought and purposed to have celebrated those endowments and qualities of your mind which were sufficient, even without the graces of the person, to render you, as you are, the ornament of the court, and the object of wonder to three kingdoms. But all my praises are but as a bull-rush cast upon a stream; if they sink not, it is because they are borne up by the strength of the current, which supports their lightness; but they are carried round again, and return on the eddy where they first began. I can proceed no farther than your beauty; and even on that too I have said so little, considering the greatness of the subject, that, like him who would lodge a bowl upon a precipice, either my praise falls back by the weakness of the delivery, or stays not on the top, but rolls over, and is lost on the other side. I intended this a Dedication; but how can I consider what belongs to myself, when I have been so long contemplating on you! Be pleased

then, Madam, to receive this POEM, without intituling so much excellency as yours, to the faults and imperfections of so mean a writer ; and instead of being favourable to the piece, which merits nothing, forgive the presumption of the Author ; who is, with all possible veneration,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most obedient,

Most humble,

Most devoted servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

then, Illinois, to receive this road, without first
making so much expediency as to the limits
and regulations of so many roads, and interest
obtainable to the people, which means
nothing, leaving the question of the
who is with all possible expediency
from Illinois, and
Most obedient
Most humble
Most devoted servant

JOHN DRYDEN

PREFACE
TO
THE STATE OF INNOCENCE;⁵
CONTAINING
THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY FOR HEROICK POETRY,
AND POETICK LICENCE.

To satisfy the curiosity of those who will give themselves the trouble of reading the ensuing Poem, I think myself obliged to render them a reason why I publish an Opera which was never acted. In the first place, I shall not be ashamed to own, that my chiefest motive was the ambition which I acknowledged in the Epistle. I was desirous to lay at the feet of so beautiful and excellent a

⁵ THE STATE OF INNOCENCE, which our author calls an Opera, was first printed in 1674, and must have been published late in the year, or more probably early in 1674-5; for Milton, who is spoken of as dead, died on Sunday, November 8, 1674.—Though termed by Dryden an Opera, it is rather, as Dr. Johnson has remarked, “a tragedy in heroick rhyme, but of which the personages are such as cannot be decently exhibited on the stage.”

Princess, a work which, I confess, was unworthy her; but which I hope she will have the goodness to forgive. I was also induced to it in my own defence, many hundred copies of it being dispersed abroad⁶ without my knowledge or consent; so that every one gathering new faults, it became at length a libel against me; and I saw, with some disdain, more nonsense than either I, or as bad a poet, could have crammed into it at a month's warning, in which time it was wholly written, and not since revised. After this I cannot, without injury to the deceased author of *PARADISE LOST*, but acknowledge, that this poem has received its entire foundation, part of the design, and many of

⁶ "This Preface," says Dr. Johnson, "contains an Apology for Heroick Verse and Poetick Licence; by which is meant not any liberty taken in contracting or extending words, but the use of both fictions and ambitious figures."

"The reason which he gives for printing what was never acted, cannot be overpassed: "I was induced to it in my own defence, many hundred copies of it being dispersed abroad without my knowledge or consent; and every one gathering new faults, it became at length a libel against me." These copies, as they gathered faults, were apparently manuscript; and he lived in an age very unlike ours, if many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be transcribed. An author has a right to print his own works, and needs not seek an apology in falsehood; but he that could bear to write the Dedication, felt no pain in writing the Preface." *LIFE OF DRYDEN.*

the ornaments from him.⁷ What I have borrowed will be so easily discerned from my mean productions, that I shall not need to point the reader to the places; and truly I should be sorry, for my own sake, that any one should take the pains to compare them together, the original being undoubtedly one of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime poems, which either this age or nation has produced. And though I could not refuse the partiality of my friend,⁸ who is pleased to commend

⁷ Mr. Aubrey, who was acquainted with Dryden, informs us in his *Life of Milton*, (which, together with his other curious accounts of English writers, I hope speedily to give the publick,) that our author, before he wrote this drama, waited on the blind bard, and asked his permission to put his great poem into rhyme. "Ay, (said Milton,) you may *tag* my verses, if you will."

⁸ Nat. Lee, who says, in the Verses which he addressed to our author on this occasion,

" To the dead bard your fame a little owes,	}
" For Milton did the wealthy mine disclose,	
" And rudely cast what you could well dispose :	}
" He roughly drew on an old-fashion'd ground	
" A chaos ; for no perfect world was found,	
" Till through the heap your mighty genius shin'd ;	
" His was the golden ore, which you refin'd.	
" He first beheld the beauteous rustick maid,	
" And to a place of strength the prize convey'd ;	
" You took her thence, to court the virgin brought,	}
" Dress'd her with gems, new-weav'd her hard-spun thought,	
" And softest language, sweetest manners, taught."	

Rymer went still farther than Lee, in his depreciation of Milton's great work. Towards the conclusion of his

me in his verses, I hope they will rather be esteemed the effect of his love to me, than of his deliberate and sober judgment. His genius is able to make beautiful what he pleases ; yet, as he has been too favourable to me, I doubt not but he will hear of his kindness from many of our contemporaries ; for we are fallen into an age of illiterate, censorious, and detracting people, who, thus qualified, set up for criticks.

In the first place, I must take leave to tell them, that they wholly mistake the nature of criticism, who think its business is principally to find fault. Criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant a standard of judging well ; the chiefest part of which is, to observe those excellencies which should delight a reasonable reader. If the design, the conduct, the thoughts, and the expressions of a poem, be generally such as proceed from a true genius of poetry, the critick ought to pass his judgment in favour of the author. It is malicious and unmanly to snarl at the little lapses of a pen, from which Virgil himself stands not exempted. Horace acknowledges that honest Homer nods sometimes ; he is not equally awake in every line ; but he leaves it also as a standing measure for our judgments,

Essay addressed to Fleetwood Shephard, in 1678, he says, " With the remaining tragedies I shall also send you some reflections on that *PARADISE LOST* of Milton's, *which some are pleased to call a POEM.*" This promise, however, he did not fulfil.

— non, ubi plura nitent in carmine, paucis
 Offendi maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
 Aut humana parum cavit natura.

And Longinus, who was undoubtedly, after Aristotle, the greatest critick among the Greeks, in his twenty-seventh chapter ΠΕΡΙ ΤΥΟΤΣ, has judiciously preferred the sublime genius that sometimes errs, to the middling or indifferent one, which makes few faults, but seldom or never rises to any excellence. He compares the first to a man of large possessions, who has not leisure to consider of every slight expence, will not debase himself to the management of every trifle; particular sums are not laid out or spared to the greatest advantage in his economy, but are sometimes suffered to run to waste, while he is only careful of the main. On the other side, he likens the mediocrity of wit to one of a mean fortune, who manages his store with extreme frugality, or rather parsimony; but who, with fear of running into profuseness, never arrives to the magnificence of living. This kind of genius writes, indeed, correctly: a wary man he is in grammar; very nice as to solecism or barbarism; judges to a hair of little decencies; knows better than any man what is not to be written, and never hazards himself so far as to fall; but plods on deliberately, and, as a grave man ought, is sure to put his staff before him: in short, he sets his heart upon it, and with wonderful care makes his business sure; that is, in plain English, neither to be blamed nor praised.—I could, saith my author,

find out some blemishes in Homer ; and am perhaps as naturally inclined to be disgusted at a fault as another man ; but after all, to speak impartially, his failings are such as are only marks of human frailty ; they are little mistakes, or rather negligences, which have escaped his pen in the fervour of his writing ; the sublimity of his spirit carries it with me against his carelessness ; and though Apollonius his Argonauts, and Theocritus his Idyllia, are more free from errors, there is not any man of so false a judgment who would choose rather to have been Apollonius or Theocritus than Homer.

It is worth our consideration a little to examine how much these hypercriticks of English poetry differ from the opinion of the Greek and Latin judges of antiquity, from the Italians and French who have succeeded them, and indeed from the general taste and approbation of all ages. Heroick poetry, which they condemn, has ever been esteemed, and ever will be, the greatest work of human nature : in that rank has Aristotle placed it ; and Longinus is so full of the like expressions, that he abundantly confirms the other's testimony. Horace as plainly delivers his opinion, and particularly praises Homer in these verses :

*Trojani belli scriptorem, maxime Lolli,
Dum tu declamas Romæ, Præneste relegi ;
Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius ac melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit.*

And in another place, modestly excluding himself

from the number of poets, because he only writes odes and satires, he tells you a poet is such an one,

— *cui mens divinior, atque os
Magna soniturum.*

Quotations are superfluous in an established truth, otherwise I could reckon up amongst the moderns, all the Italian commentators on Aristotle's book of poetry; amongst the French, the greatest of this age, Boileau and Rapin; the latter of which is alone sufficient, were all other criticks lost, to teach anew the rules of writing. Any man who will seriously consider the nature of an epick poem, how it agrees with that of poetry in general, which is to instruct and to delight, what actions it describes, and what persons they are chiefly whom it informs, will find it a work which indeed is full of difficulty in the attempt, but admirable when it is well performed. I write not this with the least intention to undervalue the other parts of poetry; for comedy is both excellently instructive, and extremely pleasant; satire lashes vice into reformation, and humour represents folly so as to render it ridiculous. Many of our present writers are eminent in both these kinds, and particularly the author of *THE PLAIN DEALER*,⁹ whom

⁹ Wycherley.

"The chronology of Wycherley's plays (said Pope to Mr. Spence,) I am well acquainted with; for he has told it me over and over again. LOVE IN A WOOD

I am proud to call my friend, has obliged all honest and virtuous men by one of the most bold, most general, and most useful satires, which has ever been presented on the English theatre. I do not dispute the preference of tragedy; let every man enjoy his taste; but it is unjust, that they who have not the least notion of heroick writing, should therefore condemn the pleasure which others receive from it, because they cannot comprehend it. Let them please their appetites in eating what they like; but let them not force their dish on all the table. They who would combat general authority with particular opinion, must first establish themselves a reputation of understanding better than other men. Are all the flights of heroick poetry to be concluded bombast,¹ unnatural, and

he wrote when he was but nineteen; *THE GENTLEMAN DANCING-MASTER* at twenty-one; *THE PLAIN DEALER* at twenty-five; and *THE COUNTRY WIFE* at one or two and thirty." Spence's ANECDOTES.

Wycherley was born about the year 1638; according therefore to this statement, he must have written his *PLAIN DEALER* in 1663. As he then lived in an expensive course of life, it is extraordinary that he should not have produced his plays on the theatre at an earlier period. The *PLAIN DEALER* was first published in 1677, the *imprimatur* being dated January 9, 1676-7. However, it appears from the passage in the text, that it had been exhibited before 1674.

¹ Our author here probably alludes to *THE REHEARSAL*, which had been published in 1672, and had with considerable success turned some of the *flights of heroick poetry* into ridicule.

mere madness, because they are not affected with their excellencies? It is just as reasonable as to conclude there is no day, because a blind man cannot distinguish of light and colours. Ought they not rather in modesty to doubt of their own judgments, when they think this or that expression in Homer, Virgil, Tasso, or Milton's PARADISE, to be too far strained, than positively to conclude that it is all fustian and mere nonsense? It is true, there are limits to be set betwixt the boldness and rashness of a poet; but he must understand those limits who pretends to judge, as well as he who undertakes to write; and he who has no liking to the whole, ought in reason to be excluded from censuring of the parts. He must be a lawyer, before he mounts the tribunal; and the judicature of one court too does not qualify a man to preside in another. He may be an excellent pleader in the Chancery, who is not fit to rule the Common Pleas. But I will presume for once to tell them, that the boldest strokes of poetry, when they are managed artfully, are those which most delight the reader.

Virgil and Horace, the severest writers of the severest age, have made frequent use of the hardest metaphors, and of the strongest hyperboles; and in this case the best authority is the best argument. For generally to have pleased, through all ages, must bear the force of universal tradition; and if you would appeal from thence to right reason, you will gain no more by it in effect, than first, to set

set up your reason against those authors; and secondly, against all those who have admired them. You must prove why that ought not to have pleased, which has pleased the most learned and the most judicious; and to be thought knowing, you must first put the fool upon all mankind. If you can enter more deeply than they have done into the causes and resorts² of that which moves pleasure in a reader, the field is open, you may be heard; but those springs of human nature are not so easily discovered by every superficial judge: it requires philosophy, as well as poetry, to sound the depth of all the passions; what they are in themselves, and how they are to be provoked; and in this science the best poets have excelled. Aristotle raised the fabrick of his poetry from observations of those things in which Euripides, Sophocles, and Æschylus pleased; he considered how they raised the passions, and thence has drawn rules for our imitation; from hence have sprung the tropes and figures for which they wanted a name who first practised them, and succeeded in them. Thus I grant you, that the knowledge of nature was the original rule, and that all poets ought to study her, as well as Aristotle and Horace, her interpreters; but then this also undeniably follows, that those things which delight all ages must have been

² This is a gallicism, for which, however, our author had authority; for Bacon before him had used *resort* in the sense of *spring*.

an imitation of Nature, which is all I contend. Therefore is rhetorick made an art; therefore the names of so many tropes and figures were invented; because it was observed they had such and such an effect upon the audience. Therefore catachreses and hyperboles have found their place amongst them; not that they are to be avoided, but to be used judiciously, and placed in poetry as heightenings and shadows are in painting, to make the figure bolder, and cause it to stand off to sight.—*Nec retia cervis ulla dolum meditantur*, says Virgil in his Eclogues: and speaking of Leander, in his Georgicks,

*Nocte natat cæca serus freta, quem super ingens
Porta tonat cæli, et scopulis illisa reclamant
Æquora.*—

In both of these, you see, he fears not to give voice and thought to things inanimate.

Will you arraign your master, Horace, for his hardness of expression, when he describes the death of Cleopatra, and says she did—*asperas tractare serpentes, ut atrum corpore combiberet venenum*,—because the body in that action performs what is proper to the mouth?

As for hyperboles, I will neither quote Lucan, nor Statius, men of an unbounded imagination, but who often wanted the poize of judgment. The divine Virgil was not liable to that exception; and yet he describes Polyphemus thus:

— *graditurque per æquor*
Jam medium, necdum fluctus latera ardua tinxit.

In imitation of this place, our admirable Cowley thus paints Goliath :

The valley now this monster seem'd to fill,

And we, methought, look'd up to him from our hill :

where the two words *seem'd* and *methought* have mollified the figure ; and yet if they had not been there, the fright of the Israelites might have excused their belief of the giant's stature.

In the eighth of the *Æneids*, Virgil paints the swiftness of Camilla thus :

Ille vel intactæ segetis per summa volaret

Gramina, nec teneras cursu læsisset aristas ;

Vel mare per medium, fluctu suspensa tument,

Ferret iter, celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas.

You are not obliged, as in history, to a literal belief of what the poet says ; but you are pleased with the image, without being cozened by the fiction.

Yet even in history, Longinus quotes Herodotus on this occasion of hyperboles. The Lacedæmonians, says he, at the Straits of Thermopylæ, defended themselves to the last extremity ; and when their arms failed them, fought it out with their nails and teeth ; till at length, the Persians shooting continually upon them, they lay buried under the arrows of their enemies. It is not reasonable (continues the critick) to believe that men could defend themselves with their nails and teeth from an armed multitude, nor that they lay buried under a pile of darts and arrows ; and yet

there wants not probability for the figure, because the hyperbole seems not to have been made for the sake of the description, but rather to have been produced from the occasion.

It is true, the boldness of the figures are to be hidden sometimes by the address of the poet, that they may work their effect upon the mind, without discovering the art which caused it; and therefore they are principally to be used in passion, when we speak more warmly, and with more precipitation than at other times: for then, *si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi*; the poet must put on the passion he endeavours to represent. A man in such an occasion is not cool enough either to reason rightly or to talk calmly. Aggravations are then in their proper places; interrogations, exclamations, hyperbata, or a disordered connection of discourse, are graceful there, because they are natural. The sum of all depends on what before I hinted, that this boldness of expression is not to be blamed, if it be managed by the coolness and discretion which is necessary to a poet.

Yet before I leave this subject, I cannot but take notice how disingenuous our adversaries appear: all that is dull, insipid, languishing, and without sinews in a poem, they call an imitation of Nature; they only offend our most equitable judges who think beyond them; and lively images and elocution are never to be forgiven.

What fustian, as they call it, have I heard these gentlemen find out in Mr. Cowley's Odes? I

acknowledge myself unworthy to defend so excellent an author, neither have I room to do it here; only in general I will say, that nothing can appear more beautiful to me than the strength of those images which they condemn.

Imaging is, in itself, the very height and life of poetry. It is, as Longinus describes it, a discourse, which by a kind of enthusiasm, or extraordinary emotion of the soul, makes it seem to us that we behold those things which the poet paints, so as to be pleased with them, and to admire them.

If poetry be imitation, that part of it must needs be best, which describes most lively our actions and passions, our virtues and our vices, our follies and our humours; for neither is comedy without its part of imaging; and they who do it best, are certainly the most excellent in their kind. This is too plainly proved to be denied; but how are poetical fictions, how are hippocentaurs and chimeras, or how are angels and immaterial substances to be imaged, which, some of them, are things quite out of nature; others, such whereof we can have no notion? This is the last refuge of our adversaries, and more than any of them have yet had the wit to object against us. The answer is easy to the first part of it. The fiction of some beings which are not in nature, (second notions, as the logicians call them,) has been founded on the conjunction of two natures, which have a real separate being. So hippocentaurs were imaged by joining the natures of a man and horse together; as Lucretius tells

us, who has used this word of *image* oftener than any of the poets ;

*Nam certè ex vivo centauri non fit imago,
Nulla fuit quoniam talis natura animai :
Verum ubi equi atque hominis, casu, convenit imago,
Harescit facile extemplo, &c.*

The same reason may also be alledged for chimeras and the rest ; and poets may be allowed the like liberty for describing things which really exist not, if they are founded on popular belief. Of this nature are fairies, pigmies, and the extraordinary effects of magick ; for it is still an imitation, though of other men's fancies ; and thus are Shakspeare's *TEMPEST*, his *MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT'S DREAM*, and Ben Jonson's *MASK OF WITCHES*, to be defended. For immaterial substances, we are authorized by Scripture in their description ; and herein the text accommodates itself to vulgar apprehension, in giving angels the likeness of beautiful young men. Thus, after the Pagan divinity, has Homer drawn his gods with human faces ; and thus we have notions of things above us, by describing them like other beings more within our knowledge.

I wish I could produce any one example of excellent imaging in all this poem. Perhaps I cannot ; but that which comes nearest it is in these four lines, which have been sufficiently canvassed by my well-natured censors :

*Seraph and cherub, careless of their charge,
And wanton, in full ease now live at large.*

*Unguarded leave the passes of the sky,
And all dissolv'd in hallelujahs lie.*

I have heard (says one of them) of anchovies dissolved in sauce, but never of an angel in *hallelujahs*: a mighty witticism! (if you will pardon a new word,)—but there is some difference between a laughter and a critick. He might have burlesqued Virgil too, from whom I took the image: *Invadunt urbem somno vinoque sepultam.* A city's being buried is just as proper an occasion, as an angel's being dissolved in ease, and songs of triumph. Mr. Cowley lies as open too in many places:

Where their vast courts the mother-waters keep,³ &c.

For if the mass of waters be the mothers, then their daughters, the little streams, are bound in all good manners to make court'sy to them, and ask them blessing. How easy it is to turn into ridicule the best descriptions, when once a man is in the humour of laughing, till he wheezes at his own dull jest; but an image which is strongly and beautifully set before the eyes of the reader will still be poetry, when the merry fit is over, and last when the other is forgotten.

I promised to say somewhat of Poetick Licence, but have in part anticipated my discourse already. Poetick Licence I take to be the liberty which poets have assumed to themselves in all ages, of speaking things in verse which are beyond the

³ DAVIDEIS. Book I.

severity of prose. It is that particular character which distinguishes and sets the bounds betwixt *oratio soluta* and poetry. This, as to what regards the thought or imagination of a poet, consists in fiction: but then those thoughts must be expressed; and here arise two other branches of it; for if this licence be included in a single word, it admits of tropes; if in a sentence or proposition, of figures; both which are of a much larger extent, and more forcibly to be used in verse than prose. This is that birthright which is derived to us from our great forefathers, even from Homer down to Ben; and they who would deny it to us, have, in plain terms, the fox's quarrel to the grapes,—they cannot reach it.

How far these liberties are to be extended I will not pretend to determine here, since Horace does not; but it is certain that they are to be varied according to the language and age in which an author writes. That which would be allowed to a Grecian poet, Martial tells you, would not be suffered in a Roman; and it is evident that the English does more nearly follow the strictness of the latter, than the freedoms of the former. Connection of epithets, or the conjunction of two words in one, are frequent and elegant in the Greek, which yet Sir Philip Sydney and the translator of Du Bartas⁴ have unluckily attempted in the English; though this, I confess, is not so

⁴ Joshua Sylvester.

proper an instance of poetick licence, as it is of variety of idiom in languages.

Horace a little explains himself on this subject of *Licentia Poetica* in verses:

*Pictoribus atque Poëtis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas ;
Sed non ut placidis coeant immitia, non ut
Serpentes avibus gementur, tigribus hædi.*

He would have a poem of a piece ; not to begin one thing, and end with another. He restrains it so far, that thoughts of an unlike nature ought not to be joined together. That were indeed to make a chaos. He taxed not Homer, nor the divine Virgil, for interressing their gods in the wars of Troy and Italy ; neither, had he now lived, would he have taxed Milton, as our false criticks have presumed to do, for his choice of a supernatural argument ; but he would have blamed my author, who was a Christian, had he introduced into his poems heathen deities, as Tasso is condemned by Rapin on the like occasion ; and as Camoëns, the author of the *Lusiads*, ought to be censured by all his readers, when he brings in Bacchus and Christ into the same adventure of his fable.

From that which has been said, it may be collected, that the definition of wit (which has been so often attempted, and ever unsuccessfully, by many poets) is only this,—that it is a propriety of thoughts and words ; or in other terms, thoughts and words elegantly adapted to the subject. If

our criticks will join issue on this definition, that we may *convenire in aliquo tertio* ; if they will take it as a granted principle, it will be easy to put an end to the dispute. No man will disagree from another's judgment, concerning this dignity of style in Heroick Poetry ; but all reasonable men will conclude it necessary, that sublimest subjects ought to be adorned with the sublimest, and consequently often, with the most figurative expressions. In the mean time, I will not run into their fault of imposing my opinions on other men, any more than I would my writings on their taste : I have only laid down, and that superficially enough, my present thoughts ; and shall be glad to be taught better by those who pretend to reform our poetry.

our critics will join with me in this opinion, that we may conceive in advance, if they will take it as a granted principle, it will be easy to put an end to the dispute. The point will be to give to another's judgment, concerning the dignity of state in heretick history, the same weight as men will concede it to in history, that is, the same weight as men ought to be allowed with the substance, and consequently often with the mere figurative expressions. In the mean time, I will not run into their rank of supposing my opinions on other men, any more than I would my writings on their case: I have only said those, and thereupon I shall be glad enough, my present thoughts; and shall be glad to be caught better by those who pretend to reform our history, than by those who pretend to reform our state.

DEDICATION

OF

AURENGZEBE.⁵

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN, EARL OF MULGRAVE,

GENTLEMAN OF HIS MAJESTY'S BEDCHAMBER, AND
KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER.⁶

MY LORD,

IT is a severe reflection which Montagne has made on Princes, that we ought not, in reason, to have any expectations from them; and that it is kindness enough, if they leave us in possession of our own. The boldness of the censure shews the free spirit of the author; and the subjects of England may justly congratulate to themselves,

⁵ This tragedy, which is written in rhyme, was first printed in 1676.

⁶ John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, was born in 1649, and was son of Edmund, earl of Mulgrave, who died in 1658. His mother was Elizabeth, one of the daughters of Lionel, earl of Middlesex, by his first wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Sheppard, a merchant of London. He was now, therefore, twenty-seven years old.

"His character (says Dr. Johnson) is not to be proposed as worthy of imitation. His religion he may be

that both the nature of our government, and the clemency of our King, secure us from any such complaint. I in particular, who subsist wholly by his bounty, am obliged to give posterity a far other account of my Royal Master, than what Montagne has left of his. Those accusations had been more reasonable, if they had been placed on inferior persons; for in all courts there are too

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supposed to have learned from Hobbes, and his morality was such as naturally proceeds from loose opinions. His sentiments with respect to women he picked up in the court of Charles, and his principles concerning property were such as a gaming table supplies. He was censured as covetous, and has been defended by an instance of inattention to his affairs; as if a man might not at once be corrupted by avarice and idleness. He is said, however, to have had much tenderness, and to have been very ready to apologize for his violences of passion. - - -

"In the ESSAY ON SATIRE, he was always supposed to have the help of Dryden. His ESSAY ON POETRY is the great work for which he was praised by Roscommon, Dryden, and Pope, and doubtless by many more whose eulogies have perished." Life of SHEFFIELD.

Pope observed to Mr. Spence, that "he was superficial in every thing, even in poetry, which was his *forte*."

"His famous Essay (said Dr. Lockier, Dean of Peterborough, who had personally known Dryden) has certainly been cried up much more than it deserves, though corrected a good deal by Dryden. It was this which set him up for a poet, and he resolved to keep up that character, if he could by any means, fair or foul. Could any thing be more impudent than his publishing that Satire, for writing which Dryden was beaten in Rose Alley, (and

many who make it their business to ruin wit ; and Montagne, in other places, tells us, what effects he found of their good natures. He describes them such, whose ambition, lust, or private interest, seem to be the only end of their creation. If good accrue to any from them, it is only in order to their own designs, conferred most commonly on the base and infamous ; and never given, but only happening sometimes on well deservers. Dulness has brought them to what they are, and malice

which was so remarkably known by the name of the Rose-Alley Satire,) as his own ? Indeed, he made a few alterations in it ; but these were only verbal, and generally for the worse." Spence's ANECDOTES.

The following lines in the STATE POEMS (vol. ii. p. 131) furnish us with a portrait of this nobleman, in which, however, there is probably somewhat of caricature :

" But let him pass ; for here comes stalking on
 " The awful majesty of stiff King JOHN ;
 " With nose cock'd up, and visage like a fury,
 " Or foreman of an *Ignoramus* jury.
 " I'll speak not of his slouching looby mien,
 " Although it be the worst that e'er was seen,
 " Because of late his whole design and trade is,
 " With those accomplishments to gain the ladies :
 " To whom his laurell'd wit has oped the way ;
 " Witness the late unparallel'd ESSAY,
 " A work which all admire,—and well they may ;
 " For what insipid sot can e'er write ill,
 " When Waller, Lee, and Dryden, take the quill."

Pope, as well as Dryden, as I learn from Mr. Spence, made several alterations in the ESSAY ON POETRY.

secures them in their fortunes. But somewhat of specious they must have, to recommend themselves to princes, (for folly will not easily go down in its own natural form with discerning judges,) and diligence in waiting is their gilding of the pill; for that looks like love, though it is only interest. It is that which gains them their advantage over witty men, whose love of liberty and ease makes them willing too often to discharge their burden of attendance on these officious gentlemen. It is true, that the nauseousness of such company is enough to disgust a reasonable man; when he sees he can hardly approach greatness but as a moated castle,—he must first pass through the mud and filth with which it is encompassed. These are they, who, wanting wit, affect gravity, and go by the name of solid men; and a solid man is, in plain English, a solid, solemn fool. Another disguise they have, (for fools as well as knaves take other names, and pass by an *alias*,) and that is the title of honest fellows. But this honesty of theirs ought to have many grains for its allowance, for certainly they are no farther honest than they are silly: they are naturally mischievous to their power; and if they speak not maliciously or sharply of witty men, it is only because God has not bestowed on them the gift of utterance. They fawn and crouch to men of parts, whom they cannot ruin; quote their wit when they are present, and when they are absent steal their jest; but to those who are under them,

and whom they can crush with ease, they shew themselves in their natural antipathy : there they treat wit like the common enemy, and give it no more quarter than a Dutchman would to an English vessel in the Indies ; they strike sail where they know they shall be mastered, and murder where they can with safety.⁷

This, my Lord, is the character of a courtier without wit ; and therefore that which is a satire to other men must be a panegyrick to your Lordship, who are a master of it. If the least of these reflections could have reached your person, no necessity of mine could have made me to have sought so earnestly and so long to have cultivated your kindness. As a poet, I cannot but have made some observations on mankind ; the lowness of my fortune has not yet brought me to flatter vice, and it is my duty to give testimony to virtue. It is true your Lordship is not of that nature which either seeks a commendation, or wants it. Your mind has always been above the wretched affectation of popularity. A popular man is, in truth, no better than a prostitute to common fame and to the people ; he lies down to every one he meets for the hire of praise, and his humility is only a disguised ambition. Even Cicero himself, whose eloquence deserved the admiration of mankind, yet by his insatiable thirst of fame he has lessened his character with succeeding ages ; his action

⁷ Our author here alludes to the massacre at Amboyna.

against Catiline may be said to have ruined the consul, when it saved the city; for it so swelled his soul, which was not truly great, that ever afterwards it was apt to be overset with vanity. And this made his virtue so suspected by his friends, that Brutus, whom of all men he adored, refused him a place in his conspiracy. A modern wit has made this observation on him,⁸ that coveting to recommend himself to posterity, he begged it as an alms of all his friends, the historians, to remember his consulship: and observe, if you please, the oddness of the event; all their histories are lost, and the vanity of his request stands yet recorded in his own writings. How much more great and manly in your Lordship is your contempt of popular applause, and your retired virtue, which shines only to a few; with whom you live so easily and freely, that you make it evident you have a soul which is capable of all the tenderness of friendship; and that you only retire yourself from those who are not capable of returning it. Your kindness, where you have once placed it, is inviolable; and it is to that only I attribute my happiness in your love. This makes me more easily forsake an argument on which I could otherwise delight to dwell, I mean—your judgment in your choice of

⁸ Our author sometimes alludes to observations made by his contemporaries, which it is not easy to trace to their source. I thought it not improbable that this remark might have been made by Cowley; but his *Essays*, in which it might be expected to be found, have it not.

friends; because I have the honour to be one. After which, I am sure you will more easily permit me to be silent in the care you have taken of my fortune, which you have rescued not only from the power of others, but from my worst of enemies, my own modesty and laziness; which favour, had it been employed on a more deserving subject, had been an effect of justice in your nature; but, as placed on me, is only charity. Yet withal, it is conferred on such a man as prefers your kindness itself before any of its consequences; and who values, as the greatest of your favours, those of your love and of your conversation. From this constancy to your friends, I might reasonably assume that your resentments would be as strong and lasting, if they were not restrained by a nobler principle of good nature and generosity; for certainly it is the same composition of mind, the same resolution and courage, which makes the greatest friendships and the greatest enmities; and he who is too lightly reconciled, after high provocations, may recommend himself to the world for a Christian, but I should hardly trust him for a friend. The Italians have a proverb to that purpose: *To forgive the first time, shews me a good catholick; the second time, a fool.* To this firmness in all your actions, though you are wanting in no other ornaments of mind and body, yet to this I principally ascribe the interest your merits have acquired you in the Royal Family. A Prince who is constant to himself, and steady in all his

undertakings; one with whom that character of Horace will agree,—

*Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinae;*—

such an one cannot but place an esteem, and repose a confidence on him, whom no adversity, no change of courts, no bribery of interests, or cabals of factions, or advantages of fortune, can remove from the solid foundations of honour and fidelity :

*Ille meos, primus qui me sibi junxit, amores
Abstulit; ille habeat secum, servetque sepulcro.**

How well your Lordship will deserve that praise, I need no inspiration to foretell. You have already left no room for prophecy; your early undertakings have been such in the service of your King and country, when you offered yourself to the most dangerous employment, that of the sea;^a when you chose to abandon those delights to which your youth and fortune did invite you, to undergo the hazards, and which was worse, the company of common seamen, that it made it evident you will refuse no opportunity of rendering yourself useful to the nation, when either your courage or conduct shall be required. The same zeal and faithfulness continues in your blood, which ani-

^a Virg. *Æneid.* iv. 28.

^a Lord Mulgrave had greatly distinguished himself in various naval engagements in both the Dutch wars.

mated one of your noble ancestors³ to sacrifice his life in the quarrels of his Sovereign; though I hope, both for your sake, and for the publick tranquillity, the same occasion will never be offered to your Lordship, and that a better destiny will attend you.—But I make haste to consider you as abstracted from a court, which, if you will give me leave to use a term of logick, is only an adjunct, not a propriety of happiness. The Academics, I confess, were willing to admit the goods of Fortune into their notion of felicity; but I do not remember that any of the sects of old philosophers did ever leave a room for greatness. Neither am I formed to praise a court, who admire and covet nothing but the easiness and quiet of retirement. I naturally withdraw my sight from a precipice; and, admit the prospect be never so large and goodly, can take no pleasure even in looking on the downfal, though I am secure from the danger. Methinks there is something of a malignant joy in that excellent description of Lucretius:

*Suave, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem;
Non quia vexari quæquam est jucunda voluptas,
Sed, quibus ipse malis careas, quia cernere suave est.*

I am sure his master, Epicurus, and my better master, Cowley, preferred the solitude of a garden,

³ Edmund, the first Lord Sheffield, who lost his life in 1548, in quelling an insurrection at Norwich, a city for more than two centuries noted for seditious turbulence.

and the conversation of a friend, to any consideration, so much as a regard, of those unhappy people whom, in our own wrong, we call the great. True greatness, if it be any where on earth, is in a private virtue, removed from the notion of pomp and vanity, confined to a contemplation of itself, and centering on itself :

Omnis enim per se Divûm natura necesse est

Immortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur ;

————— *curâ semota, metuque,*

*Ipsa suis pollens opibus.**

If this be not the life of a deity, because it cannot consist with Providence, it is at least a godlike life. I can be contented (and I am sure I have your Lordship of my opinion) with an humbler station in the temple of Virtue, than to be set on the pinnacle of it :

Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre

Errare, atque viam palantes quærere vitæ.

The truth is, the consideration of so vain a creature as man, is not worth our pains. I have

* Our author has either quoted from memory, or altered the original to accommodate the passage to his purpose. The lines of Lucretius (ii. 645) are,

Omnia enim per se Divûm natura necesse est

Immortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur,

Semota à nostris rebus, sejunctaque longe.

Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,

Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,

Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira.

fool enough at home without looking for it abroad; and am a sufficient theatre to myself of ridiculous actions, without expecting company either in a court, a town, or a playhouse. It is on this account that I am weary with drawing the deformities of life, and lazars of the people, where every figure of imperfection more resembles me than it can do others. If I must be condemned to rhyme, I should find some ease in my change of punishment. I desire to be no longer the Sisyphus of the stage; to roll up a stone with endless labour, which, to follow the proverb, *gathers no mass*, and which is perpetually falling down again. I never thought myself very fit for an employment, where many of my predecessors have excelled me in all kinds; and some of my contemporaries, even in my own partial judgment, have outdone me in comedy. Some little hopes I have yet remaining, (and those too, considering my abilities, may be vain,) that I may make the world some part of amends for many ill plays, by an heroic poem. Your Lordship has been long acquainted with my design; the subject of which you know is great, the story English, and neither too far distant from the present age, nor too near approaching it.⁵ Such it is in my opinion, that I could not have wished a nobler occasion to do honour by it to

⁵ Dr. Johnson thought that our author's intention to write an epick poem was here mentioned in obscure terms, from an apprehension that his plan might be "purloined, as he says, happened to him when he told it

my King, my country, and my friends; most of our ancient nobility being concerned in the action. And your Lordship has one particular reason to promote this undertaking, because you were the first who gave me the opportunity of discoursing it to his Majesty, and his Royal Highness; they were then pleased both to commend the design, and to encourage it by their commands; but the unsettledness of my condition has hitherto put a stop to my thoughts concerning it. As I am no successor to Homer in his wit, so neither do I desire to be in his poverty. I can make no rhapsodies, nor go a begging at the Grecian doors, while I sing the praises of their ancestors. The times of Virgil please me better, because he had an Augustus for his patron; and to draw the allegory nearer you, I am sure I shall not want a Mæcenas with him. It is for your Lordship to stir up that remembrance in his Majesty, which his many avocations of business have caused him, I fear, to lay aside; and, as himself and his royal brother are the heroes of the poem, to represent to them the images of their warlike predecessors; as Achilles is said to be roused to glory with the sight of the combat before the ships. For my own part, I am satisfied to have offered the design; and it may be to the

more plainly in his Preface to Juvenal." From that Preface it appears that the poem which he now meditated, was to have been founded on the actions of either King Arthur, or the Black Prince.

advantage of my reputation to have it refused me.

In the mean time, my Lord, I take the confidence to present you with a tragedy, the characters of which are the nearest to an heroick poem. It was dedicated to you in my heart, before it was presented on the stage. Some things in it have passed your approbation, and many your amendment; you were likewise pleased to recommend it to the King's perusal before the last hand was added to it, when I received the favour from him to have the most considerable event of it modelled by his royal pleasure. It may be some vanity in me to add his testimony then, and which he graciously confirmed afterwards, that it was the best of all my tragedies,⁶ in which he has made authentick my private opinion of it; at least, he has given it a value by his commendation, which it had not by my writing.

That which was not pleasing to some of the fair ladies in the last act of it, as I dare not vindicate, so neither can I wholly condemn, till I find more reason for their censures. The procedure of Indamora and Melesinda seems yet, in my

⁶ "AURENGZEBE has the appearance of being the most elaborate of all the dramas. The personages are imperial, but the dialogue is often domestick, and therefore susceptible of sentiments accommodated to familiar incidents. The *complaint of life* is celebrated, and there are many passages that may be read with pleasure." Johnson's Life of DRYDEN.

judgment, natural, and not unbecoming of their characters. If they who arraign them fail not more, the world will never blame their conduct; and I shall be glad, for the honour of my country, to find better images of virtue drawn to the life in their behaviour, than any I could feign to adorn the theatre. I confess I have only represented a practicable virtue, mixed with the frailties and imperfections of human life. I have made my heroine fearful of death, which neither Cassandra nor Cleopatra would have been; and they themselves, I doubt it not, would have outdone romance in that particular. Yet their Mandana (and the Cyrus was written by a lady) was not altogether so hard-hearted; for she sat down on the cold ground by the King of Assyria, and not only pitied him who died in her defence, but allowed him some favours, such perhaps as they would think should only be permitted to her Cyrus. I have made my Melesinda, in opposition to Nourmahal, a woman passionately loving of her husband, patient of injuries and contempt, and constant in her kindness to the last; and in that, perhaps, I may have erred, because it is not a virtue much in use. Those Indian wives are loving fools, and may do well to keep themselves in their own country, or at least to keep company with the Arrias and Portias of old Rome; some of our ladies know better things. But it may be, I am partial to my own writings; yet I have laboured as much as any man to divest myself of

the self-opinion of an author, and am too well satisfied of my own weakness to be pleased with anything I have written. But on the other side my reason tells me, that, in probability, what I have seriously and long considered may be as likely to be just and natural, as what an ordinary judge (if there be any such amongst those ladies) will think fit, in a transient presentation, to be placed in the room of that which they condemn. The most judicious writer is sometimes mistaken, after all his care; but the hasty critick, who judges on a view, is full as liable to be deceived. Let him first consider all the arguments which the author had to write this, or to design the other, before he arraigns him of a fault; and then perhaps, on second thoughts, he will find his reason oblige him to revoke his censure. Yet after all, I will not be too positive. *Homo sum, humani à me nihil alienum puto*: as I am a man, I must be changeable; and sometimes the gravest of us all are so, even upon ridiculous accidents. Our minds are perpetually wrought on by the temperament of our bodies, which makes me suspect they are nearer allied than either our philosophers or school-divines will allow them to be. I have observed, says Montagne, that when the body is out of order, its companion is seldom at his ease. An ill dream, or a cloudy day, has power to change this wretched creature, who is so proud of a reasonable soul, and make him think what he thought not yesterday; and Homer was

of this opinion, as Cicero is pleased to translate him for us :

*Tales sunt hominum mentes quali pater ipse
Jupiter auctiferâ lustravit lampade terras.*

Or as the same author in his Tusculan Questions speaks, with more modesty than usual, of himself : *Nos in diem vivimus ; quodcunque animos nostros probabilitate percussit, id dicimus.* It is not therefore impossible but that I may alter the conclusion of my play, to restore myself into the good graces of my fair criticks ; and your Lordship, who is so well with them, may do me the office of a friend and patron, to intercede with them on my promise of amendment. The impotent lover in Petronius, though his was a very unpardonable crime, yet was received to mercy on the terms I offer. *Summa excusationis meæ hæc est : placebo tibi, si culpam emendare permiseris.*

But I am conscious to myself of offering at a greater boldness in presenting to your view what my meanness can produce, than in any other error of my play ; and therefore make haste to break off this tedious address, which has, I know not how, already run itself into so much of pendency, with an excuse of Tully's, which he sent with his books *De Finibus*, to his friend Brutus : *De ipsis rebus autem, sæpenumero, Brute, vereor ne reprehendar, cum hæc ad te scribam, qui tum in poesi, (I change it from philosophid,) tum in optimo genere poeseos tantum processeris. Quod si facerem*

quasi te erudiens, jure reprehenderer. Sed ab eo plurimum absum: nec, ut ea cognoscas quæ tibi notissima sunt, ad te mitto; sed quia facilius in nomine tuo acquiesco, et quia te habeo æquissimum eorum studiorum quæ mihi communia tecum sunt, æstimatorem et judicem; which you may please, my Lord, to apply to yourself, from him, who is

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

Most obedient,

humble servant,

DRYDEN.⁷

⁷ This is the only instance I have found of our author's subscribing his surname, in the French mode, without the Christian name. His friend, Sir William D'Avenant sometimes adopted the same mode.

In the Prologue to this tragedy, which was acted by the King's Servants at the Theatre Royal, Dryden acknowledged, that he was grown "weary of his long-lov'd mistress, rhyme." He accordingly never afterwards produced an heroick play.—The reign of rhyming tragedies, which were introduced by the bad taste of Charles the Second, who had learned to admire them during his residence in France, lasted about fifteen years; from 1662 to 1676. A few heroick plays afterwards appeared, but they were not long-lived.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

quaint to ourselves, like a reproach, that we do not
 of human nature; not, as in common parlance, but
 human mind, as a matter of fact, and as a thing in nature.
 the evidence, it seems to me, to be a question of
 the human mind, and as a matter of fact, and as a thing in nature.
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It is the only one of our authors
 who has not been translated into French. His friend, Sir William D'Avenant
 and his adopted the same mode of writing.
 In the tragedy to the tragedy, which was acted by the
 King's company at the Theatre Royal, D'Avenant
 found that he was grown "wary of his long-lived
 misadventure." He accordingly, after afterwards
 produced a heroic play. The reign of Henry
 was which were introduced by the bad taste of Charles
 the Second, who had learned to admire them during his
 residence in France, lasted about fifteen years; then
 came a long period. A few heroic plays afterwards appeared,
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THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.